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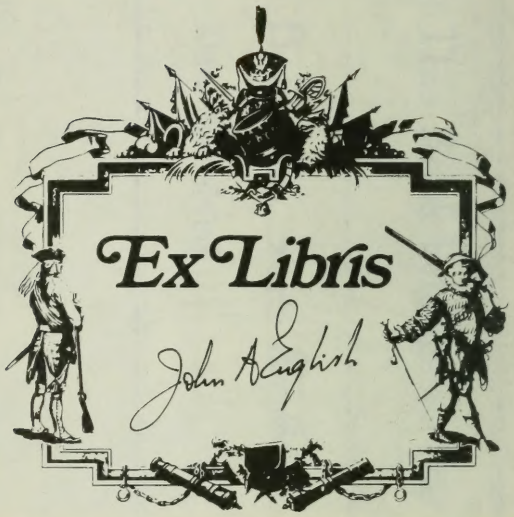


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TRANSLATED BY RUSSELL D. GILLMAN, F.R.G.S.

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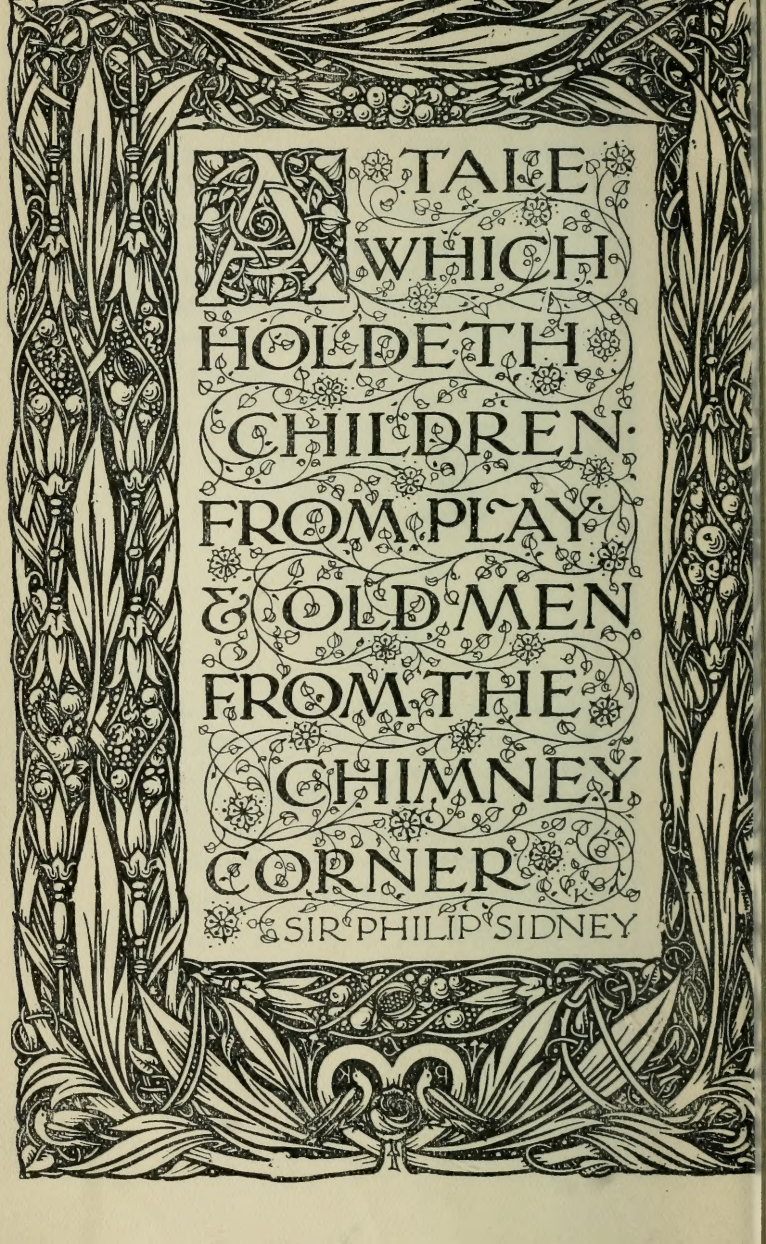
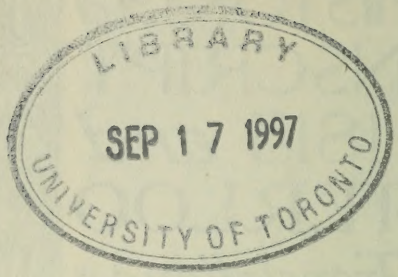

A TALE
WHICH
HOLDETH
CHILDREN
FROM PLAY
& OLD MEN
FROM THE
CHIMNEY
CORNER
SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

# The HISTORY of a CONSCRIPT OF 1813 and WATERLOO

New Translations from MM. Erckmann-Chatrian by RUSSELL DAVIS GILLMAN

LONDON: PUBLISHED by J. M. DENT & SONS LTD AND IN NEW YORK BY E. P. DUTTON & CO

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# INTRODUCTION

THE task of alloting to MM. Erckmann-Chatrian their proper position in the literature of Europe is simplified by the fact that their more serious work (with which we are now concerned) is quite unique. They portray the position of the humbler classes in France towards the Napoleonic cult; they indicate in plain yet convincing language the inherent weakness of that cult after Napoleon began his wild career of attempted conquest for the sake of "glory"; and they do not forget to show the follies of the Bourbons, which resulted in the French nation, despite its terrible losses between 1789 and 1814, welcoming back the great warrior from Elba. They also tell us with the convincing fervour of truth rather than the noise of the enthusiast, of the real causes of the Revolution, and those later causes which swept it away. Every student of history is more or less acquainted with the plain facts thus dealt with, but nobody else has related with such photographic exactitude the feelings, the flexibility, even the fickleness of the French people. Great deeds of high courage are not despised, but are taken rather as a matter of course. The horror of conscription is vividly shown, and so are the hardships of the soldier's life. Historically, the account of Waterloo is not reliable. Patriotism has usurped the place of impersonal truth. But that is of no great importance, inasmuch as we do not read Erckmann-Chatrian for tactical exactitude, but rather to discover what was the mind of the people of France —that fascinating and volatile race, whose glories are to be found in peace as well as in war; a race which, when it fights, will fight with equal readiness among its own folk as it did in defence of invasion, or for those "rights of man" which were used by Napoleon to dazzle his Empire and to plunge it into dire disaster.

MM. Erckmann-Chatrian were both born in 1822, and of course their youthful minds were filled with the wonders of imagination following on the relation of deeds taken part in by nearly all the older men around them. M. Erckmann was a clever lawyer, and his collaborateur was at one time a glass worker and afterwards a schoolmaster. Their home was

Alsace, and perhaps their descriptions of the beauties of that really charming country are somewhat idealised. They lived in the days of rich living, when rich living could be obtained. The voice of the teetotaler had not been heard in the land, neither had that of the apostles of the simple life, if we except the sturdy Capuchin who wrought such havoc at the Inn of the Ham of Mainz. But that does not belong to this book. We take for our guide good old Father Goulden, who, looking through his big spectacles from his shop window at Phalsbourg, relates the history of Europe as he saw and read it, in those stirring times when Wordsworth sang of the joy of being alive—and young. We who have lived a little longer have seen the fruits of many of the seeds sown in those vivacious years. Some are good and some are evil, after the manner of all human and transitory actions. But Father Goulden, if rather too enthusiastic for the cause he had had at heart, was a just man, and admitted the faults of his early idols.

Joseph Bertha, the domesticated young man with a good heart and a bit of a limp, tells us of the terrible campaign of 1813. In his mouth is placed the military part of the story, and in Father Goulden's the political. We rejoice over the sweet womanliness of the young man's wife, and smile at the vehemence of Aunt Grethel. She would worship Napoleon to-day, and, if it appeared to suit her peace of mind, she was equally ready to do homage to the Bourbons and to attend the masses of expiation for Cadoudal and his colleagues. The plot is correct and well conceived. The military portion of the books is excellent if we take the point of view that the observations are those of a young conscript, who hears more than he sees. The charm of the authors will never fade. Day by day we perceive the fact that their more serious books are by no means tales of adventure after the manner of *Peter Simple*, but a unique and truly French mixture of realism and thrifty love. Tolstoy could hardly do more to enhance the cause of peace than do the present works. They have been regarded as books for boys, but there is that in them which the serious student of history can ill afford to miss. The intense patriotism of the Alsatians is one of the outstanding features of modern European history.

In order to realise the condition of France before the Revolution one should read Thackeray's *History of the Four Georges*. We have ample opportunity of studying the "Last Phase." Carlyle and Dickens have written vividly of the

bloody scenes of the Revolution. Its prime events have been carefully traced in Fyffe's *History of Modern Europe*. But if we would learn, in plain language, of the horrors of Napoleon's later campaigns, and especially if we desire to comprehend the true relation of the average Frenchman towards the Bourbons, we must go to MM. Erckmann-Chatrian. Count Segur creates for us a race of rather artificial heroes. The ladies of Josephine's time love their scandal and their chatter. But here we see the intense aversion felt by young Frenchmen to fighting after the Emperor had abandoned his earlier ideals, and again we see the sacrifices which they were ready to make in order to restore those "rights of man" which the stupid Bourbons held so cheaply, and which the Emperor juggled with.

The present translation is entirely new, and every possible attempt has faithfully been made to give the story told by the authors, in suiting it to a tongue which they did not use, and which sometimes adapts itself, and sometimes does not, to the narration of the ideas which they embodied in their tales.

R. D. GILLMAN.

1909.

The following is a list of the works of Emile Erckmann and Louis G. C. A. Chatrian:—

WORKS IN COLLABORATION: Histoires et Contes fantastiques (from the *Democrate du Rhin*), 1849; Schinderhannes (Jean l'Ecorcheur), 1850; Contes fantastiques, 1860; Contes de la Montague, 1860; Maître Daniel Roch, 1861; Contes des Bords du Rhin, 1862; Le Fou Yégof, 1862; Madame Thérèse, 1863; Histoire d'un Conscrit de 1813, 1864; Waterloo, 1865; La Guerre, 1866; Le Blocus, 1867; L'Histoire d'un Paysan, 1868. (The last seven formed a series of tales dealing with events during the Republic and the Empire.)

The war of 1870-71, and other contemporary events, provided subjects for: Histoire du Plébiscite, racontée par un des 7,500,000 oui, 1872; Le Brigadier Frédéric, 1874; Une Campagne en Algérie, 1874; Souvenirs d'un Chef de Chantiers à l'Isthme de Suez, 1876; Alsace, 1881; le Banni, 1882.

Other works of general interest were: L'Ami Fritz, 1864 (afterwards dramatised); Histoire d'un homme du peuple, 1865; Les Confidences d'un joueur de Clarinette, 1865; Maison Forestière, 1866; Histoire d'un Sous-maître, 1869; Maître Gaspard Fix, 1876; Contes Vosgiens, 1877; Le Grand-père Lebigre, 1880; Les Vieux de la Vieille, 1881; Quelques Mots sur l'esprit Humain, 1880; L'Art et les grands Idéalistes, 1885.

L'illustre Doctor Mathéus, 1859, was a work by E. Erckmann, who also published separately Kaleb et Khora, La première Campagne du Grand-père Jacques, and Alsaciens et Vosgiens d'autrefois, etc., 1895.

Several successful plays were also brought out by the two authors. Among these was Le Juif Polonais, translated as The Bells.

The chief of the above-named works have been translated into English.

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# THE CONSCRIPT

A TALE

OF THE DAYS OF

# NAPOLEON I.

# THE CONSCRIPT

## A TALE OF THE DAYS OF NAPOLEON I.

### CHAPTER I

People who did not see the glory of the Emperor Napoleon during the years 1810 to 1812 cannot realise the height to which the power of man can rise. When the emperor passed through the province of Champagne, or Lorraine, or Alsace, folks who were busily working in the harvest fields or vineyards felt impelled to leave everything in order to run and behold him. From eight or ten leagues they would come—men, women, children, veterans, all rushing into the road where he passed, waving their hands and crying, "Vive l'Empereur, vive l'Empereur!" It might have been supposed that this man was a god; that it was he who gave breath of life to the world, and that if, by ill-fortune, anything happened to him, all would be at an end. Some of the old veterans of the republic shook their heads, and whispered, over their wine, that even the emperor might fall—but they were regarded as senseless. Their suggestions seemed to be opposed to the very forces of nature, and so passed unheeded.

Since 1804, I had worked as an apprentice to old Melchior Goulden, the watchmaker at Phalsbourg. As I seemed to be rather weak, and was a little lame, it was the desire of my mother for me to follow a lighter trade than most of those pursued in our neighbourhood, for you saw nobody but woodcutters, charcoal burners, and wheelwrights in Dagsbourg. Monsieur Goulden and I dwelt in the first floor of the large corner house, facing the Red Bull, close to the French Gate. Ah, those were the times to see the arrival of princes, ambassadors, and generals! Some of them came on horseback, some in caleches, and others in the carriages called berlines. They came in their gold-laced coats, with plumes, furs, and decorations of all countries. And, on the main road, you should have seen the couriers and despatch-bearers riding by; the trains of

powder waggons, the loads of shot, the tumbrils, the cavalry and infantry! What a busy time it was!

In five or six years the hotel-keeper, Georges, made his fortune, and bought meadows, orchards, and houses, and had plenty of money. For these people who came from Germany, or Switzerland, or Russia, or Poland, or elsewhere, cared not at all for a few handfuls of gold, more or less, scattered on the highway; they were all nobles, and appeared to take some kind of credit to themselves for practising no economy whatever.

All day long, all night, too, the Red Bull was open. Through the row of tall windows on the ground floor might be seen great tables covered with white cloths, glittering with silver plate, and groaning with a rich supply of game, fish, and other good things. At these tables the travellers sat in a row, and in the great court yard at the back a perpetual neighing of horses mingled with the shouts of the postillions, peals of laughter from the servant-maids, and the rolling of carriages coming in or out through the great yard gates. The Red Bull hotel will never see again such glorious times as those.

Men who belonged to the town also put up there; people whom one could remember in old days looking for dry wood in the forests, or collecting manure on the roads. They were now commandants, colonels, generals, men governing thousands; and all through fighting battles in different parts of the world! Old Melchior, as he sat with his black silk skull-cap drawn down over his great hairy ears, his horn spectacles upon his nose, and his lips tightly compressed, could not help now and then laying aside his magnifying-glass and his tools, to glance over at the inn, especially when the postillions, in their heavy boots, little jackets, with pigtails of plaited hemp at the backs of their necks, cracked their whips along the ramparts, announcing the arrival of some new personage. Then he would watch them, and at times I heard him say to himself—

"Look there! that is the son of the old tiler, Jacob; of the old clothes-mender, Marie Anne; or of Franz Sepel, the cooper. He has made his way. Now he's a colonel, and Baron of the Empire into the bargain. Why doesn't he alight at his old father's, who lives in the Rue des Capucins yonder?" When he saw them walking along, shaking hands right and left with people who recognised them, his face would change; and, wiping his eyes with his great square-patterned handkerchief, he would say—

"How glad poor old Annette will be! That's right, that's

right; he's not proud, he's a brave man. I hope a bullet won't carry him off one day." Some passed along as if they were ashamed of seeing their home, while others marched proudly through the town to visit a sister or a cousin. These latter were talked about as if all Phalsbourg wore their crosses and epaulettes; while the others were despised as much as when they used to sweep the roads—and even more so.

Nearly every month Te Deums were sung for some new victory, and the cannon of the arsenal fired twenty-one shots, that made one's heart tremble. For the following week there would be anxiety in every family, and especially the poor old women would be expecting a letter. As soon as the first letter came, all the town knew of it. "So and so has had news of Jacques or of Claude," and everybody was running to hear if the letter said nothing about Joseph or Jean Baptiste. I say nothing about the promotions or the certificates of death; for as regards the promotions, every one believed in them, it being necessary to fill the dead men's places. But relations waited, weeping, for death certificates, which did not come to hand directly; sometimes, indeed, they did not come at all, and the poor old people kept on hoping and thinking, "Perhaps our boy is a prisoner, and when peace is made he will come back. How many have come back who were thought to be dead!" Only, peace was never made; and as soon as one war was over another was begun. We always wanted something or other, sometimes in Russia, sometimes in Spain, or elsewhere; the emperor was never satisfied.

Often, when regiments marched through the town, the skirts of their long greatcoats tucked up round their hips, their knapsacks on their backs, their long gaiters reaching to the knees, carrying their muskets as they liked, hurrying forward, now covered with mud, now white with dust, Father Melchior, after watching the stream, would say to me in a contemplative manner—

"Tell me, Joseph, how many men do you think we have seen pass this way since 1804?"

"Oh, I don't know, Monsieur Goulden," I would reply, "at least four or five hundred thousand."

"Yes—at least," he would repeat; "and how many have you seen come back?"

Then I understood what he meant, and I answered—

"Perhaps they came back by Mayence, or by some other way. It is not possible otherwise."

But he would shake his head and say—

"Those whom you have not seen come back are dead, as hundreds and hundreds of thousands of others will die, unless the good God has pity on us; for the emperor cares for nothing but war. He has already spilt more blood to give crowns to his brothers than our great revolution spilt to gain the rights of man." And then we would go back to our work. But Father Goulden's reflections set me thinking very seriously.

I certainly limped a little on my left leg; but so many who had defects had received their order to march, notwithstanding.

Such thoughts filled my head, and for a long time they made me very low-spirited. It seemed to me a terrible thing, not only because I did not love war, but also because I loved my cousin Catherine, of the village of Quatre Vents. We had, so to say, been brought up together. You could not see a fresher or more smiling girl; she was fair, with beautiful blue eyes, rosy cheeks, and pearly-white teeth. She was nearly eighteen years old, and I was nineteen; and Aunt Margrethel seemed glad to see me come early every Sunday morning to breakfast and dine with them.

Catherine and I used to go to the orchard behind the house. We ate the same apple or the same pear between us, and we were the happiest couple in the world. It was I who took Catherine to mass and to vespers! and when there was a fête she never let go my arm, and refused to dance with any of the other boys of the village. Everybody knew that we were to be married some day; but if I had the misfortune to be sent away in the conscription, there would be an end of it. I wished I had been a hundred times more lame than I was; for in those days they took first the bachelors, then the married men without children, and then the married men who had children, and in spite of myself I thought, "Are lame men better than fathers of families? Might they not put me in the cavalry." The very thought was enough to make me feel melancholy, and I was ready to run away from it all.

But it was principally in 1812, at the beginning of the war against the Russians, that my fears increased. From the month of February to the end of May, every day we saw regiment after regiment go by; dragoons, cuirassiers, carabineers, hussars, lancers all in gay uniforms, artillery, tumbrils, field hospitals, carriages, provisions, on and ever on, like a river that is running, and whose end you never see.

I remember that it began with grenadiers driving great waggons to which oxen were harnessed. The oxen were used

instead of horses, that they might afterwards serve for provisions when the stores they drew had been consumed. Everybody said, "What a clever idea! When the grenadiers can no longer feed the oxen, the oxen will feed the grenadiers." Unfortunately, those who said that did not know that oxen can only travel seven or eight leagues a day, and that they require at least a day's rest, after a week's travelling; and these poor beasts already staggered along with broken horns, slavering mouths, their eyes half out of their heads, and nothing more than skin and bone. For three weeks they kept on passing through, all torn with bayonet-pricks. Meat became very cheap, for many of these oxen had to be slaughtered; though few people would buy the beef, for is not diseased meat unwholesome? Most of them never got so far as twenty leagues beyond the Rhine. After that we saw a perpetual stream of lances, sabres, and helmets going by. All of them poured in through the French Gate, passed across the Place d'Armes, by the principal street, and went out at the German Gate.

At last, on the 10th of May, 1812, very early in the morning, the thunder of the cannon announced the arrival of the master of all. I was still asleep in bed when the first shot was fired that made the window-panes rattle like a drum. Presently Monsieur Goulden opened my door, with a lighted candle in his hand, and said—

"Get up—here he is."

We opened the window. Through the darkness we saw about a hundred dragoons advancing at a rapid trot through the French Gate; several of them carried torches. They came on with a terrible clattering and trampling. The light of their torches flashed like flames over the fronts of the houses; and from every window issued cries of "Vive l'Empereur! Vive l'Empereur!"

I was looking at a carriage they were escorting, when a horse ran against a stake opposite butcher Klein's shop, where the oxen were tied up. The dragoon fell like a dead weight, his legs stretched wide, his helmet in the gutter; and a moment afterwards a head looked out of the carriage window to see what was the matter—a large head, with a pale, fat face, and a tuft of hair on the forehead. It was Napoleon; he had one of his hands up, as if in the act of taking a pinch of snuff, and said a few words in a rough tone. The officer who was galloping by the carriage window bent down as if to answer him. Napoleon took his pinch of snuff, and the carriage turned the corner amid renewed

cries and another salvo of cannon. And that was all I saw.

The emperor did not stop at Phalsbourg; for while the last cannon-shots were being fired he was already speeding along the road to Saverne. Then silence was restored. The men on guard at the French Gate drew up the drawbridge, and the old watchmaker said to me, "Did you see him?"

"Yes, Monsieur Goulden," I replied.

"Look here," said he, "that man has the life of every one of us in his hands. He has but to breathe upon us, and we are done for. Let us bless Heaven that he is not a bad man, for, if he were, the world would see terrible things, as in the time of the barbarian kings and of the Turks."

He seemed to be in pensive mood, and after a moment or two, he added, "You can go back to bed; there's three o'clock striking."

He returned to his room, and I went back to mine. The great silence outside seemed profound after all the uproar; and till the day dawned I kept on dreaming of the emperor. I also thought of the dragoon, and wanted to know if his fall had killed him. Next day we heard that he had been carried off to the hospital, and that he would recover.

From that day to the end of September many Te Deums were sung in the churches, and as many salutes of twenty-one cannons were fired for a victory. It was always in the morning. Then M. Goulden would say, "Well, Joseph, another victory gained! Fifty thousand men down, twenty-five standards, a hundred cannon! All goes well, all goes well! Now the next thing will be a new levy, to fill up the places of those who have fallen."

He had opened my door, and there I saw him standing, all grey and bald, in his shirt-sleeves, with his neck bare, and washing his face in a basin of water.

"Do you think, M. Goulden," I said to him, in a tremble, "do you think they will take lame men?"

"No, no," he would answer kindly; "don't be afraid, my boy: you really cannot serve. We'll manage all that. Only work well, and don't worry yourself about anything."

He saw how disquieted I was, and that distressed him. I have never known a better man. Then he dressed himself to go out, and wind up the clocks in the town, those of the commandant, the mayor, and the people of consequence. As for me, I stayed at home. M. Goulden did not come back till after the Te Deum was over. He took off his long snuff-coloured

coat, placed his wig in its box, and drew his black silk cap down over his ears. Then he said—

"The French army is at Wilma, or perhaps at Smolensk. I have just heard that at the commandant's. God grant that we may get the best of it this once more and that peace may be made. The sooner the better, for war is a terrible thing."

I also thought that if peace were made there would be no need for so many men, and that I should be able to marry Catherine. So you may imagine how ardently I wished for a glorious success for the emperor.

## CHAPTER II

It was on 15th September, 1812, that the news came of our great victory of the Moskwa. Everybody was in an ecstasy of joy, and all said, "Now we shall have peace—now the war is over."

Some evil-minded rascal remarked that China still remained to be taken; but there are always men of that sort, who go about making their fellow-creatures miserable.

A week afterwards it was known that our army had entered Moscow, the greatest and richest city in Russia. Everybody was thinking of the booty that would be taken, and imagined this would diminish the taxes we had to pay. But soon afterwards the news was spread abroad that the Russians had set fire to their city, and that our army would have to beat a retreat to Poland, if they did not wish to expire of hunger. It was the talk of the town, in the cafés, in the taverns, in the corn market—everywhere; no two persons could meet, but one of them was sure to say, "So things are going badly, hein? The retreat has begun!"

There was a blanched look on everybody's face; and in front of the post-office hundreds of peasants stood waiting daily from morn till eve, but no more letters came. I went about among these people without paying much heed to them, for I had seen so much of that kind of thing; and, moreover, I had thoughts within me that made everything appear bright and cheerful.

You must know that for five months, I had wanted to make Catherine a fine present on her birthday, which was on the 18th of December.

Among the watches which hung in M. Goulden's window, there was a small one, quite a little gem, with silver case, and little circles over it that made it shine like a star. Around the dial, under the glass, was a copper scroll, and on the dial-plate two lovers were painted, who were making a tender declaration to each other; for the lad was giving a large bouquet to his sweetheart, and she was modestly casting down her eyes as she held out her hand.

The first time I saw this watch, I said to myself, "You must not let it go; it must be for Catherine. You must have it, even if you have to work every night till twelve o'clock." For after seven o'clock M. Goulden used to let me work on my own

account. We used to have old watches to clean and regulate, and mend. That used to give a good deal of trouble, and when I had completed a job of that sort, M. Goulden paid me well. But the price of the little watch was thirty-five francs; therefore, you may imagine how many hours I had to work by night to get it. I am sure that if M. Goulden had known that I wanted it, he would have made me a present of it; but I would not have had it at a sou below its price, for that seemed wrong to me; I said to myself, "I must earn it, so that no one can have a claim upon it." Only, for fear any one should take it into his head to buy it, I had put it aside in a box, and had said to Father Melchior that I knew of a customer for that watch.

Everybody will understand why these stories of war went in at one ear and out at the other. While I worked I was always dreaming how pleased Catherine would be. For five months I had this picture continually before my eyes. I thought how she would look when she received my present: and I asked myself, "What will she say?" Sometimes I thought she would exclaim, "Oh, Joseph! what are you thinking of? That is far too beautiful for me! No, no, I cannot accept such a beautiful watch." And then I thought how I would make her take it, and would slip it into the pocket of her apron, and say, "Come now, Catherine—come now, do you want to make me unhappy?" For I knew she would want it, and that she would only pretend to refuse it. Sometimes I fancied how she would blush and lift up her hands, and say, "Good Heavens! now I know, Joseph, that you love me," and that she would embrace me, with tears in her eyes. I felt very happy. Aunt Grethel would approve of it all. In fact, thousands and thousands of thoughts passed through my mind; and every night, when I went to bed, I said to myself, "There is not such a happy fellow as yourself, Joseph. Now you can make Catherine a fine present by means of your own work. And surely she is also preparing something for your birthday, for she thinks of nothing but you. You are both of you very happy, and when you are married all will go well." These thoughts filled me with tender emotion; I had never before known such complete happiness.

While I was working in that way, and thinking only of my own joy, winter came on earlier than usual, towards the beginning of November. It did not begin with snow, but with dry leaves, and hard frost. In a few days all the leaves had fallen, the ground was as hard as stone, and everything was covered with a white veil—the roof, the ground, and the windows.

What fires we had to keep up that year to prevent the cold from coming in through the cracks! If the door remained open for a moment, all the heat was gone; the logs crackled in the stove, and the chimney drew famously.

Every morning I hastened to wash the windows of our shop with hot water; but I had hardly closed a window before it was covered with a coat of ice. We could hear the people running by, breathing hard, with their noses in the collars of their overcoats, and their hands in their pockets. Nobody cared to stop, and the doors of houses were shut with wonderful rapidity.

Where the sparrows had gone I know not—whether they were alive or dead—but not a single one chirped on the chimneys; and except the reveille and the tattoo that were beat at the barracks, no sound broke the silence.

Often, when the fire crackled briskly, M. Goulden would suddenly stop in his work, and with a glance at the white window-panes, he would say—

"Our poor soldiers! Our poor soldiers!"

He said it in such a mournful voice that I felt my heart sink, and replied, "But M. Goulden, they must be in Poland by this time, in good barracks, for to think that human beings could bear such cold as this is out of the question."

"Such cold as this!" he retorted. "In this country it is cold, very cold, because of the bleak currents from the mountains; but, after all, what is this cold compared with that of the north, in Russia and Poland? God grant they have started early enough! Good heavens! good heavens! what a heavy responsibility rests upon those who have led these men!"

Then he was silent, and I would sit thinking for hours together of what he had said. I pictured to myself our soldiers on their march, running to warm themselves. But thoughts of Catherine always came back to me; and I have often afterwards thought that when a man is happy himself, the misfortunes of others affect him very little; especially in his young days, when the passions are stronger, and experience of great misery has yet to come.

After the first frosts, so much snow fell that the couriers were stopped by it on the side of Quatre Vents. I was afraid I should not be able to join Catherine on her birthday; but two companies of infantry went out with pickaxes, and cut a way through the hardened snow to let the carriages pass. This road remained till the beginning of the month of April, 1813.

However, each day brought us nearer to Catherine's birthday,

and my happiness increased in proportion. I had already saved my thirty-five francs, but I did not know how to tell M. Goulden that I was going to buy the watch; I would rather have kept the whole matter secret, and felt annoyed at having to speak about it.

At last, the evening before the birthday, between six and seven o'clock, as we were working away quite quietly, with the lamp between us, I all at once made up my mind, and said—

"You remember, M. Goulden, that I spoke to you about a purchaser for a little silver watch?"

"Yes, Joseph," he answered, without disturbing himself at his work; "but he has not yet come."

"It is I, M. Goulden, who am the purchaser."

Then he looked up in astonishment. I took out the thirty-five francs and put them upon the counter; but he continued looking at me. "Well," said he at last, "that is not a watch for you, Joseph. What you want is a large watch to fill your pockets well, and mark the seconds. Those small watches are intended for women."

I did not know what to say in reply.

After considering for a few seconds, M. Goulden began to smile. "Ah! yes, yes," he said, "I understand it now. It is Catherine's birthday to-morrow, and that is why you have been working day and night. See, take back your money; I don't want it."

I felt quite confused, and replied, "Father Goulden, I thank you heartily; but this watch is for Catherine, and I am glad I have earned it. You would grieve me if you refused to take the money; I would as soon not take the watch!"

He said nothing more, but took the thirty-five francs. Then he opened a drawer and selected a pretty little steel chain, with two silver-gilt keys, and fastened it to the watch, and then put the whole into a box with a pink bow. He did all this slowly, and seemed agitated. But at last he handed me the box, and said, "That is a pretty present, Joseph. Catherine ought to esteem herself very lucky to have a lover like you. She is a good girl. Now we can go to supper; lay the table while I go and take the pot off the fire."

This we did, and then Father Goulden took out from the cupboard a bottle of his Metz wine, which he kept for great occasions, and we drank after the manner of two comrades. During the evening he never ceased to talk to me about the good time of his youth, saying that he had once loved a girl but that in the

year '92 he had been carried off at the general conscription that was made because of the invasion by the Prussians, and that on his return he had found the girl married—quite a natural thing, as he had never allowed himself to declare his affection to her.

It did not prevent him, however, from remaining faithful to this his tender memory; and he spoke of it with a reverent air. I listened to him, thinking of Catherine, and it was not till on the stroke of ten, when the guard came round to relieve the sentries —which was done every ten minutes because of the cold—that we put two big logs in the stove, and at last retired to bed.

## CHAPTER III

THE next day, 18th December, I awoke about six o'clock in the morning. It was fearfully cold, and my little window was covered with an icy curtain.

I had taken care, the previous evening, to spread out over the back of my chair my light blue swallow-tailed coat, my trousers, goatskin waistcoat, white shirt, and my fine black silk cravat. Everything was ready; my stockings and my well-blacked boots were at the foot of the bed, and I had nothing to do but to dress. In spite of that, the cold struck upon my face, and the sight of the frozen panes, and the deep silence outside made me shiver. If it had not been Catherine's birthday I should have stayed where I was till noon; but, all at once, the remembrance of what the day was made me jump out of bed and run as fast as I could to the great earthenware stove, where there were always some red cinders from the night before to be found among the ashes. I found one or two, and hastily heaped small pieces of wood upon them, as well as two great logs. After which I ran and buried myself again in the bedclothes.

M. Goulden, behind his thick curtains, with the bedclothes drawn up over his nose, and his cotton nightcap drawn over his eyes, had awakened a minute before. He heard me, and cried out, "Joseph, it has never been so cold as this for forty years. I can feel that. What a winter we are going to have!"

I did not answer him, for I was looking from a distance to see if the fire was burning up. The cinders kindled well; I could hear the chimney drawing, and all at once there was a blaze. The sound of the flame made one's heart glad; but it took quite half an hour to make the air feel at all warm.

At last I rose and dressed myself. M. Goulden continued talking: but as for me, I thought of nothing else but Catherine; and when towards eight o'clock I had finished dressing, and was going out, M. Goulden, who had been watching me as I went to and fro, exclaimed, "Why, Joseph, what are you thinking of, you unlucky fellow? Are you going to Quatre Vents in that thin coat? Why, you will fall down dead half-way on the road. Go into my cabinet, and find my big cloak, and mufflers, and the double-soled boots lined with flannel; take those."

I was so well satisfied with my personal appearance, that I hesitated whether or not to take his advice. Noticing this, he said, "Listen to me. Yesterday they found a man frozen to death on the road to Wechem. Dr. Steinbrenner said that he sounded like a piece of dry wood when you tapped it. He was a soldier. He had left the village between six and seven o'clock, and at eight o'clock they found him; so it is soon done. If you want to get your ears and your nose frozen you had better go out as you are now."

I then saw that he was right, so I put on his thick shoes, passed the cord of the mufflers round my shoulders, and then put the cloak over me. So I went out, after thanking M. Goulden, who reminded me not to come back too late, because the cold grew more intense at night, and a large number of wolves had got over the Rhine on the ice.

Before I had even reached the church I had pulled up the foxskin collar of the cloak to save my ears. The cold was so intense that it felt like needles in the air, and one shuddered in spite of oneself to the soles of one's feet. Under the German Gate I noticed a soldier on guard, in his long grey cloak, standing like a saint in his niche. He held the gun with his sleeve, that he might not get his fingers frozen against the iron. Two icicles hung down from his moustache. Not a soul was to be seen on the bridge or in front of the Toll House. A little farther on, beyond the ramparts, I saw three waggons in the middle of the road, with their large tilts shut down as tight as game-baskets. They glittered with hoar-frost; they had been left there, and the horses taken away. In the distance everything seemed dead; all living beings were hiding themselves, and burrowing in some hole; and the only sound one heard was the crunching of the snow beneath the feet.

As I ran past the cemetery, where the crosses and tombs glittered in the midst of the snow, I said to myself, "Those who sleep yonder feel no more cold." I pressed the cloak close upon my chest, and thrust my nose into the fur collar, mentally thanking M. Goulden for his thoughtfulness. I also thrust my hands into the mufflers almost up to the elbows, and trotted along the great trench, that seemed to have no end. The soldiers had dug it from the village to Quatre Vents. The sides were like walls of ice. At some points, swept clean by the wintry wind, one could see the ravine of Fiquet, the oak forests and blue mountains that seemed so much nearer than they really were,

because the air was clear. The farm dogs were no longer barking, it was too cold even for them.

In spite of all this the thought of Catherine warmed my heart; and soon I saw the first houses of Quatre Vents. The chimneys and the thatched roofs were not much higher than the huge mounds of snow on the right and left of the road. All along the walls the people had made trenches in the snow from one house to another. On that day every family stayed round its own hearth; and the little round window-panes seemed pierced with red points, gleaming with the great fires within. In front of every door a truss of straw had been laid to prevent the cold from getting in underneath.

At the fifth door on the right I stopped to take off my wraps; then I opened the door, and shut it again very firmly; for it was the door of my aunt Grethel Bauer, the widow of Mathias Bauer, and the mother of Catherine.

As I entered, with my teeth chattering, Aunt Grethel, who was sitting before the stove, turned her grey head round in astonishment at my great foxskin collar; whilst Catherine, dressed in her Sunday clothes, with a handsome striped skirt, a kerchief with long fringe over her shoulders and crossed in front, the band of her red apron drawn lightly round her slender waist, and a pretty blue silk cap with black velvet ribbons encircling her white and pink face, with its sweet eyes and slightly tilted nose, jumped up and cried out, "It is Joseph!" and without stopping to look twice, she ran to embrace me, and said, "I knew that the cold would not stop you from coming."

I was so happy that I could not talk. I took off my cloak and hung it on the wall with the mufflers. I also took off M. Goulden's large shoes, and felt that I was quite pale with joy.

I should have been glad to find something pleasant to say, but, as nothing would come, I burst out all at once, "See, Catherine, here is something for your birthday; but first of all you must kiss me once more before you open the box."

She offered me her soft pink cheek, and then walked to the table; Aunt Grethel also drew near to look. Catherine untied the string and opened the box. I was behind her, and my heart beat rapidly. I was afraid that after all the watch would not be pretty enough. But after a moment Catherine put her hands together and sighed softly, "Oh, how beautiful! It is a pretty watch!"

"Yes, indeed," said Aunt Grethel, "it is most beautiful. I

have never seen such a pretty watch; one would think it was silver."

"But it is silver!" said Catherine, turning towards me as if to ask me to corroborate.

Then I said, "Do you suppose, Aunt Grethel, that I would think of giving a plated watch to her whom I love more than my own life? If I could do such a thing I should despise myself like the mud on my shoes."

When Catherine heard me say this, she came and put her arms round my neck; and as we stood thus I thought to myself, "This is the happiest day of my life." I could not let her go. But at last Aunt Grethel asked, "What is that painted on the glass?"

I had not the strength to answer her. Only at last, when we were sitting side by side, I took the watch in my hands and said to her, "This picture, Aunt Grethel, represents two lovers who love each other more than any one can express; their names, Joseph Bertha and Catherine Bauer. Joseph offers a bouquet of roses to her whom he loves, and she is holding out her hand to take it."

When Aunt Grethel had examined the watch, she said to me, "Come and let me embrace you, too, Joseph; I can understand that you must have worked very hard and have been frugal to buy this watch. It is very beautiful, and you are a good workman, and an honour to us."

I embraced her in the fulness of my heart, and from that moment till noon I did not let go Catherine's hand. It made us happy only to look at one another.

Aunt Grethel busied herself at the stove to prepare pancakes, with dried plums and little cakes, soaked in spiced wine, and other things, but we took no notice of her. It was not until Aunt Grethel, who had meanwhile put on her red pelisse and her black sabots, called out cheerily, "Come, my children, to dinner," that we glanced at the snow-white tablecloth, the great soup-tureen, the bottle of wine, and the large round yellow pancakes on a big dish in the centre. This was a goodly sight, and Catherine said, "Sit down yonder, Joseph, by the window, so that I can see you well. Only you must arrange my watch for me, for I do not know where to put it."

I put the chain round her neck, and then we sat down and dined with a good appetite. Out of doors not a sound was to be heard, as the fire crackled on the hearth. It was very snug in the big kitchen; the grey cat, which was rather wild, watched

us through the balustrades of the staircase at the back without daring to come down.

Catherine, after dinner, sang to us "Der lieber Gott." She had a sweet voice, which seemed to mount up to Heaven. I sang quite softly, as second to her. Aunt Grethel, who could never rest without doing something, even on Sunday, had sat down to spin; the humming of her wheel was heard in the silence, and we all felt moved and full of emotion. So soon as our song was finished we began another. At three o'clock aunt gave us some cakes. Catherine and I ate from the same plate, laughing in the joy of our hearts, and Aunt Grethel would say, now and then, "Come, come; one would think you were a couple of children."

She pretended to be angry, but we could see that her eyes twinkled, and that in the depths of her heart she was laughing too. This went on until four o'clock, when night began to fall. We could see the dark shadows through the little windows, and remembering that we must soon part, we sat down sadly by one another near the hearth, where the lurid flames danced. Catherine pressed my hand, and I as I sat with my head bent forward, I would have given my life to stay where I was. This lasted for a good half-hour, and when Aunt Grethel said, "Joseph! do you hear? It is time for you to go. The moon does not rise till midnight, it will soon be quite dark, and in this very cold weather an accident may so easily happen."

These words fell upon me like a blow and Catherine tightened her hold upon my hand; but Aunt Grethel knew better than we did.

"That is enough," she said, and she rose and unhooked the cloak from the wall, remarking, "you shall come again next Sunday."

There was nothing for it but to put on M. Goulden's thick shoes, and the cloak and mufflers. I should have liked to make it last a hundred years, but unfortunately aunt assisted me. When I had the high collar pulled well up about my ears, she said, "Let us embrace, Joseph."

I kissed her first, and then Catherine, who said nothing more. After that I opened the door, and the terrible cold which rushed in at once warned me that I must not delay.

"Make haste," said Aunt Grethel. "Good night, Joseph; good night," said Catherine. "Don't forget to come on Sunday."

I turned back to wave my hand, and then set off running,

with my head down; for the cold was so intense that my eyes were running with tears behind the great fur collar.

I had been hastening thus for twenty minutes, when a hoarse drunken voice cried out in the distance, " Who goes there? "

Then I looked out into the grey evening, and saw, fifty yards in front of me, Pinacle the pedlar, with his great pack, his seal-skin cap, woollen gloves, and his iron-tipped staff. The lantern which hung from the top of the pack threw a light on his drunken face, his chin bristling with yellow hair, and his great nose, which was shaped like an extinguisher. He strained his wolfish eyes, and repeated, " Who goes there? "

Pinacle was the greatest vagabond in the neighbourhood. The year before he had had a quarrel with M. Goulden, who claimed from him the value of a watch he had undertaken to deliver to M. Austell, the pastor of Homert, the price of which watch he had pocketed, declaring that he had paid it over to me. But though this cheat had held up his hand and taken an oath to that effect before the judge, M. Goulden knew perfectly well that it was a lie, inasmuch as neither he nor I had been away from home on the day in question. Beside this, Pinacle wanted to dance with Catherine at the fête of Quatre Vents, and she had refused him, because she knew the story of the watch; and, moreover, she remained on my arm.

This wicked rascal had a grudge against me; and to meet him thus suddenly in the middle of the road, far from the town, and away from all help, with his thick iron-shod stick, was not very agreeable to me. Happily, the little lane to the left of the cemetery was close to my left hand, and I ran quickly into it without answering him, though the snow came almost to my waist.

He then guessed who I was, and called out quite angrily, " So, so, it is the little lame youngster, stop a moment, I want to say good night to you, you come from Catherine's house, and you are a watch stealer."

As for me, I leaped like a hare over the hills of snow as he tried to pursue me. But his burden stopped him, and when he saw that I gained way upon him he held his hands to his lips and shouted, " All the same, lame youngster, you will be paid out for this, the conscription is coming. The conscription for thin men with one eye, for lame men, and for the humped back, and you will have to go and find your grave yonder with the rest."

With this, he went on his way rejoicing, laughing like a drunkard. I had hardly strength left me to breathe, but having

got safely back to the road at the entrance to the fort I thanked Heaven that friends were so near to me; for this man Pinacle was very notorious with his knife if an opportunity arose for a fight, and of course he might have given me a very nasty stab. In spite of all the exercise that I had taken, my feet were quite benumbed beneath my warm shoes, so I set off to run again.

That night the water was frozen in all the tanks of Phalsbourg, and so was the wine in the cellars, which had not been known to happen for more than sixty years.

At the first bridge by the ramparts and under the German Gate, the silence seemed to be even more profound than in the morning; there was something awful about it in the night. A few stars dimly glittered through the large white clouds floating over the sky. All down the town, I did not meet a human being, and when I got to the entry of our house, and had shut the door, it seemed quite warm although the little gutter running near the wall was frozen over. For a moment I paused to take breath and then ascended in the dark with my hand on the rail of the staircase. As I opened the door of my room the warmth from the stove was most comforting. M. Goulden was sitting there in a cosy armchair in front of the fire, with his black silk cap drawn down over his head and his hands resting on his knees. "Ah," said he, "it is you, Joseph," without even turning his head. "Yes," I replied, "Father Goulden, it is very cold here, but how cold it is outside; surely we have never had such a winter as this before." "No," he said, in a solemn voice, "this is a winter which will long be remembered." With this, I went to the closet to replace cloak and mufflers, together with the thick shoes, and I was about to tell him of my adventure with Pinacle, when, on returning to the room, he said, "Did you enjoy yourself, Joseph?" I replied, "Yes; Aunt Grethel and Catherine both sent their kind regards to you."

"Well, well," he replied, "so much the better; it is quite right for the young people to enjoy themselves, for when they get old from suffering and see injustice done, and have seen the effects of egotism and misfortune, everything seems gloomy and spoiled." He uttered these words to himself, gazing at the flames in the stove. Never had I seen him so gloomy, and when I asked him if he felt ill, instead of replying, he murmured, "Yes, yes, there you have your great military nations . . . your glory," and he shook his head, bending forward lost in thought, his thick grey eyebrows drawn closely together. I did not quite understand it all.

Suddenly he arose and said, " At the present moment, Joseph, there are four hundred thousand families mourning in France; our grand army has perished in the snowy steppes of Russia; all those young and strong men whom we saw passing are buried beneath the snow; the news has arrived to-day. It is appalling to think of! "

I said nothing. What I understood best was that there would be a fresh conscription. It was the case after every new campaign, and, on this occasion, it was more than likely that even lame men would be taken with the rest. The thought turned me pale, and I recalled Pinacle's prophecy.

" Now, Joseph, creep quickly to bed," said Father Goulden; " as far as I am concerned I am not sleepy; I intend to remain where I am; this sort of thing does not suit me. Did you observe anything in the town to-day? "

I replied, " No, Father Goulden."

With this I went into my room and got into bed, but for a long time it was difficult to sleep owing to my dread of the conscription, and to my thoughts of Catherine, and of the many thousands of poor men buried in the snow; and at last I persuaded myself it would be better if I fled into Switzerland. About three o'clock I heard Father Goulden retire to his bed, and soon after this, by God's mercy, I fell asleep.

## CHAPTER IV

NEXT morning, soon after seven o'clock, I went into Father Goulden's room in order to see about my work, and he was in bed, apparently exhausted. " I do not feel quite well, Joseph," he said, " these terrible tales and rumours have affected me; I have not been able to sleep." I inquired if I should make him some tea, but he replied, " No, my boy, it would do me no good at all; but perhaps you will mend the fire a little, and then I will get up. At this time of day I ought to go out to regulate the clocks in the town, as I do every month, but I really cannot go, it would cause me great unhappiness to see so many worthy people suffering pain and affliction; people whom I have known for many years. Joseph, you take the keys that are hanging behind the door, and go instead of me; that will be better. I will try to sleep a little and to compose my nerves."

I promised M. Goulden that I would go, and as soon as I had mended the stove by putting some wood on the fire, I took the long cloak and mufflers, drawing the curtains closely round Father Goulden's bed, and sallied forth with the bunch of keys in my pocket. I was troubled somewhat at Father Goulden's indisposition, but one idea consoled me. I said to myself, " You are about to climb the belfry tower, and when you are there you will be able to see the house where Catherine dwells with Aunt Grethel." These thoughts assailed me until I reached Brainstein's, the bell ringer, who lived at the corner of a little square in a ramshackle old place. Two of his sons were weavers, and here one heard the grinding of looms and the whizzing of the shuttles continually from morning to night. The grandmother, an old woman with sunken eyes, was usually asleep in an old armchair, on the back of which a magpie perched. Father Brainstein used to sit and read his almanac behind the little diamond-paned windows when it was not necessary for him to ring the bells for a marriage or a baptism or a funeral. Close by the side of his house was a shed under the market roof, where Konians, the shoemaker, was always at work; and farther on were stalls belonging to fruit sellers and butchers.

When I got to Brainstein's house, the old man rose and said, " Master Joseph, is that you? " I replied, " Yes, Father Brain-

stein, I have come to-day instead of M. Goulden, who is not quite well." "Ah, well," he replied, "it is all the same"; whereupon he put on his old knitted jacket and his large cap of wool, on which the cat had been sleeping, fetched the huge key of the belfry, and we went out together. How glad I was to be in the open air, for, notwithstanding the cold, everything in that small house was grey with smoke, and it seemed like going into an oven. I was never able to understand how the people managed to live in such a way.

We were walking along the street when Father Brainstein remarked to me that he supposed I had heard of the great misfortune which had befallen our troops in Russia. I replied that I had, and that it was very terrible.

"Yes," he replied, "most certainly; but you see it will bring in a good many masses for the church. Everybody will be requiring masses to be said for their children, especially as the poor unfortunate creatures died in a heathen country."

I could only acquiesce in what he said.

We crossed the square, and opposite the council chamber, near the barracks, there was quite a crowd of people, some from the country and some from the town, who were reading a notice posted on the wall. We went up to the steps and entered the church, and there saw about a score of women, many old and some young, kneeling on the stone floor, despite the terrible cold.

"You see?" said Father Brainstein. "What did I tell you? they are already coming to pray, and I have no doubt that half of them have been here since five o'clock."

With this, he opened a small door in the tower, by which we reached the organ, and we climbed up into the darkness. We were then amongst the organ pipes, and passing to the left of the bellows we came to the bells. How glad I was to see the sky again and breathe the open air, for the musty smell of the bats that haunted the whole place almost suffocated me; but how terrible the cold was in this place, which was little more than an open cage, with only two windows. It was a dazzling sight that snowy day, for the view extended over sixty miles of the country below.

There stood the little town of Phalsbourg, with its six forts, its three half-moons, its bastions, its glacis and ramparts, and its exercising place, and straight lines of little houses, just as if they had been drawn upon a sheet of white paper. One could even see right down into the yards; and I, who was not accustomed

to the height, took care to stand well in the middle of the platform, lest a fancy to jump down should lay hold upon me, as it has laid hold upon other people, who have lost their heads on looking down from great heights. I dared not approach the clock, with its plate painted at the back with its hands, and if Father Brainstein had not lead the way, I should have remained there, clinging to the beams of the bells; but he said, "Come, come, Joseph, look, is this the right time?"

Thereupon I pulled out Father Goulden's large watch which marked the seconds, and perceived that the clock was too slow. Brainstein assisted me in moving the weights, and we also set the hands right. He said, "The clock always loses time in the winter, in consequence of the effect of the cold weather upon the iron."

Presently things became rather more familiar, and I looked around at the landscape, which was spread out below us like a panorama. The barracks by the oak wood, the barracks above the town, the Bigelberg, and, finally, I saw the little village of Quatre Vents on the far distant ridge, and I could plainly recognise Aunt Grethel's house. The smoke was rising from the chimney, and mounting towards the sky, like a thin, blue thread. I could see the kitchen, and there I pictured to myself Catherine, with her wooden sabots, and her short woollen skirt, sitting at the spinning wheel in the chimney corner, and thinking about me. This moved me so much that I felt the cold no longer. It was difficult for me to take my eyes away from that chimney.

Father Brainstein, who, of course, had no idea what I was looking at, said, "Oh, yes, Master Joseph, in spite of all the snow, the roads are covered with people now, for the terrible news has spread quite rapidly, and everybody is coming in to know what may be the extent of his misfortunes."

I instantly saw that he was quite right, for all the roads, the lanes, and the paths were covered with people coming into the town, and in the great square I saw a large crowd, growing bigger and bigger in front of the guard-house, and at the house of the mayor, and another in front of the post-office. The sound of their whispering rose up like a great murmur. Eventually, after taking a final look at Catherine's house, it was time for us to go down, and we began climbing down the winding staircase of the large dark tower, until it seemed that we were descending a well. At last, when we reached the organ, we could see from the balcony that not only had the crowd greatly increased, but that the church was full. All the mothers, sisters, and the old

dames, rich and poor alike, were kneeling before the altar in profound silence, and praying for those far away, and promising to give everything if they could only be allowed to see them just once again. At first, I was not able to understand it, but suddenly the thought entered my head that if I had had to march away the year before Catherine would be here also, praying to God for me, and praying Him to give me back to her. This thought touched my heart, and made me tremble all through.

I cried out to Brainstein, "Come away! come away! This is terrible." He asked, "What is terrible?" "War," I said.

So we descended the staircase to the main door, and I crossed the large square to the house of Commandant Meunier, while Brainstein himself went back to his own house. At the corner of the square, near the Town Hall, I saw a sight which I shall never forget as long as I live. A huge notice had been posted up, and many hundreds of people from the town and country, both men and women, were all standing together, with pale faces and outstretched necks, gazing at the placard in solemn silence; many of them could not read, and sometimes one would say to the other in French or German, "But they can't all be dead—surely some will come back."

Others called out, "We cannot see anything; we cannot get near enough."

A poor old woman behind was ringing her hands, and crying, "Ah! my poor Christopher, my poor Christopher!"

Others, as if angry with her, cried, "Do try and make that old woman keep quiet."

Everybody, you see, was thinking of himself alone. More people were continually coming up behind from the German Gate, and at last Harmentier, the sergeant of police, came from the watch house and stood on the top of the steps, with a large piece of paper in his hand, similar to that which was placed on the wall; some soldiers were with him. Everybody ran towards him, but the soldiers made them stand back. Harmentier began by reading the notice, which he called the twenty-ninth bulletin, in which the emperor stated that, during the retreat from Moscow, the horses had died every night by thousands; he said nothing about the men. As the sergeant read slowly and more slowly, the listeners whispered never a word; even the old woman listened dumbly like the rest, although she could not understand French.

The silence was such that one could hear a pin drop. When the sergeant came to this passage: "Our cavalry were so utterly disorganised that it was necessary to form the officers, who still had a horse left, into four companies of one hundred and fifty men each; the generals and colonels acting as regimental officers, and those of lower rank as privates." When he read this, which spoke more than anything for the sufferings of the Grande Armée, I heard cries and groans on every side, and two or three women fell to the ground, and had to be helped away.

The notice terminated with these words: "The health of his Majesty has never been better." This was indeed one great consolation to us; unhappily, this consolation could not bring back to life the 300,000 men buried in the snow, and the people went away very, very sad. Others continued to flock in, and from hour to hour the sergeant stood on the steps reading the notice over and over again. This went on until the evening. I felt sad and ran away, for I would very much rather have heard nothing about it.

My next visit was to the honourable commandant. I went into his drawing-room, and found he had just finished breakfast. He was a fine, sturdy old gentleman, with a red face and a good appetite. "Oh!" he said, "it is you. Is not Father Goulden coming?"

"No, Monsieur Commandant, he is quite ill on account of the bad news."

"Oh, yes, yes, I can quite well imagine it," as he drank his wine, "it is very unfortunate."

Then, while I was lifting the glass globe of his clock, he said, "Ah! Joseph, you may tell Father Goulden that we intend to take our revenge. Parbleu! we cannot always have the best of it. We have been leading them about to the beat of drums, to the sound of fifes, for the last fifteen years, and it is only fair they should have this one little consolation; and, remember, our honour is safe, we have not been beaten. If it were not for the snow and for the cold the Cossacks would have found us very difficult fellows to contend with. Have a little patience; the ranks will soon be filled, and then it will be time for them to look out."

I wound up the clock, and he came and looked, being a lover of clockwork. He pinched my arm quite good-temperedly, and when I was about to retire from the room, he called out, and catching hold of my coat, as he buttoned up his own, he said, "You may tell old Father Goulden that he may sleep in peace,

for the dance is going to begin again next spring; they will not always have the winter on their side, those Kalmucs! Will you tell him that?"

"I will, Commandant," said I. And then I shut the door.

His burly face and his good humour quite comforted me for a time, but in every house that I afterwards visited, at the house of the Harviches, or that of the Frantz Toms and Durlachs, one heard nothing but lamentation. The women, especially, refused to be comforted. The men said little, but walked up and down, with bent heads, and did not even seem to observe my presence in their houses. About six o'clock, I had only two more people to visit: M. de la Vablerie-Chamberlan, the old aristocrat, living at the end of the long street, with Mdme. Chamberlan-d'Ecof and Mlle. Jeanne, their daughter. These were emigrants who had returned only three or four years before. They never visited anybody in the town, and only saw three or four curés living in the neighbourhood. The old gentleman loved nothing but hunting; he kept several dogs at the end of his court yard, and a two-horse coach. Father Robert, of the Rue des Capucins, was not only their coachman, but their groom, their footman, their huntsman, and their general servant. The old gentleman always wore a hunting coat, a cap of boiled leather, and spurred boots. Sometimes he was called in the town, "the wild man of the woods." But nobody said anything about Mdme. or Mlle. de Chamberlan.

My spirits were very low indeed as I opened the great door by means of a pulley, and the creaking noise echoed through the great hall. Imagine my astonishment when I heard, amidst all the mourning, sounds of revelry, and singing and piano playing. M. de Vablerie was singing, and his daughter was playing the accompaniment. In my ignorance I was not aware that the misfortunes of some people cause rejoicing to others, and I said to myself, as my hand was on the handle of the door, "Surely they have not yet heard the tidings from Russia."

As I stood there the kitchen door opened, and Louise, the serving maid, put her head through the opening, and asked who was there. When I told her, she replied, "Oh! it is you, is it, M. Joseph; will you please to come this way?"

In this house there was a large clock in the grand salon, where strangers are very seldom admitted. The lofty windows, looking out upon the court yard, had their Venetian blinds always

closed. But there was sufficient light for my purpose. I walked through the kitchen, regulated the antique clock, which was a magnificent specimen in white marble, while Louise was looking on. At last I remarked, "You appear to have company, Mlle. Louise."

"Oh, no; but my master has instructed me to let no one come in."

"They seem to be very merry here," I replied.

"Yes, truly," she said, "and it is the first time for many years. I do not understand what has happened to them."

After I had finished with the clock, I went and pondered over these things, which seemed to me to be unaccountably strange; it never occurred to me that these people were rejoicing at our defeat. After leaving that house, I turned round the corner to go to Father Ferals, who used to be called the Standard Bearer, because, when he was about forty-five years of age, he being a smith by trade, and the head of the household for many years, he had carried the flag of the Phalsbourg Volunteers in the year 1792, and had not returned home until after the campaign of Zurich was ended. His three sons, Jean, Louis, and George Ferals, were all in the army in Russia. George was a captain of dragoons, and the others were officers in the infantry.

I had tried to imagine to myself what the grief of Father Ferals would be, but my imagination was nothing to what I perceived when I entered his presence. Poor old man! there he sat, blind and quite bald, in an armchair before the stove; head bowed down on his chest, his sightless eyes gazing far away, as though he saw his sons stretched on the ground. He did not speak, but the great drops of sweat ran from his forehead down his long and haggard cheeks, and so pale did he look that he seemed as if about to breathe his last. Several of his old comrades of the days of the republic were there to try to comfort him. Father Desmarets, Father Nivoi, Father Paradis, and old Froissart. In silence they sat around him, smoking their pipes, and with sorrow depicted in their faces. From time to time the silence would be broken by their words. One would say, "Come, come, Ferals, are not we still the veterans of the army of the Sambre and of the Meuse?" or, "Courage, old Standard Bearer, courage! Do you not remember that we charged and took the great battery at Fleurus?" and many other such speeches of the same kind, intended to comfort the good old man. But he, alas, gave no answer. From time to time he sighed, his hollow cheeks grew swollen, and then he would

bend forward, and the others, more by signs than by words, said, while shaking their heads, "Alas! It goes badly with him."

I hastened to wind up the clock as quickly as I could and go away, for it pierced me to the heart to witness the misery of this poor man. When I reached home, I found Father Goulden in his workshop. He remarked, "Well, here you are, Joseph. How are things going?" And then I gave him a report of all that I had seen. He replied very sadly, "Yes, I know all that, but, unfortunately, all this is only the beginning of worse things. The Prussians, the Austrians, the Russians, the Spaniards, and all those other nations whom we have robbed since 1804 will take the opportunity of our ill-fortune to fall upon us. Since we insisted in placing kings upon their thrones, and giving them princes and princesses whom they did not know from Adam and Eve, they will return the compliment and introduce others to us with nobles and all who follow in their train. So that, after we have shed our blood in order to provide for the emperor's relations, we shall lose all those rights which we won by means of the revolution. Instead of being in the forefront, as we imagined we should be, we shall be the last of all nations. That is what will happen to us now. While you were working in the town, I have been thinking about it, and about nothing else, and I am sure it is inevitable. The soldiers were our mainstay, and, as we have no soldiers left, we have nothing with which to defend ourselves."

Then he rose, and I prepared the table. As we ate our dinner together in silence, the solemn church bells began to toll. "Somebody has died in the town," said Father Goulden. I answered, "Yes"; although I told him that I had not heard anything about it during my work in the town. A few minutes after this, Rabbi Rose came into the shop in order to have a glass placed in the front of his watch, and Father Goulden asked him who was dead. He replied, "It is the old Standard Bearer."

"What," we said, "Father Ferals?"

"Yes, an hour and a half ago. Father Desmarets and several others did their best to comfort him. Finally, he asked them if they would read to him the letter he had last received from George, his son, the captain of dragoons. He had written early in the year to say that he hoped to come home and embrace his old father, and that a colonel's epaulets would be on his shoulders. On hearing that, the old Standard Bearer tried to rise up, but he

dropped down with his head on his knees, for the letter had broken his heart."

Father Goulden sat in silence on hearing this story. At last he said, " Here, Rabbi Rose, is your watch, the cost is twelve sous."

So Rabbi Rose went away, and we returned to our dinner table in silence.

## CHAPTER V

SHORTLY afterwards the *Gazette* announced that the emperor was in Paris, and that the King of Rome and the Empress Marie Louise were to be crowned. The mayor, the deputy, and the town councillors talked of nothing but the rights of the throne, and a purposely composed speech was made on the subject in the Rath Haus. Professor Burguet composed the speech, and Baron Parmentier read it. But the people were not moved by it, for everybody was afraid of being carried away by the conscription. It was expected that a large number of soldiers would be required, and that troubled everybody. As for me, I grew thinner daily.

It was of no use for M. Goulden to keep saying to me, "Fear nothing, Joseph, you really cannot march. Consider, my boy, that such a lame fellow as you would be left on the road at the first stage." All that did not prevent my being filled with disquietude.

People had already left off thinking about those who had fallen in Russia, except those belonging to them. Sometimes as we sat together at work M. Goulden would say to me, "If those who are our masters, and who say that God has placed them on earth to make us happy, could picture to themselves, at the beginning of a campaign, the poor old men, the unhappy mothers, whose hearts they are going to break to satisfy their own pride; if they could see these poor women's tears, and hear their groans, when people come to tell them, 'Your son is dead, you will never see him again—he has perished under the hoofs of the horses, or has been smashed by a cannon-ball, or is in a hospital far away, after having had a limb amputated, in a fever, without consolation, calling for you as he used to do when he was little'—if they could picture the tears of these mothers, I do not think one of them would be so barbarous as to go on with such work. But they think of nothing; they fancy that other people do not love their children as much as they love theirs; they think people are brutes! But they are mistaken. All their great genius and all their great ideas of glory are vain; for there is only one thing that should make a people march out—

men and women, children and aged persons—and that is when our liberty is attacked, as it was in '92; then men win together or die together; whoever stays behind is a coward, and wants other men to fight for him. Then victory is not for the benefit of a few; it is for all, and father and son defend their family. If they are killed it is a misfortune, but they die in defence of their rights. That, Joseph, is the only just war, and one of which nobody can complain; all others are shameful, and the glory they bring is not the glory of a man but the glory of a wild beast." In this way worthy Father Goulden spoke, and I quite agreed with him.

But all at once, on 8th January, a great notice was posted up at the mayor's, by which it appeared that the emperor, with the aid of a senatus-consultum, as they called it in those days, intended to make a levy in the first place of 150,000 conscripts of 1813, then 100 cohorts of the first levy of 1812 who thought that they were quite free, then 100,000 conscripts of 1809 and 1812, and so on to the end. In this way all the gaps would be stopped, and we should have even a larger army than before we went to Russia.

When Father Fouze, the glass-worker, came to tell us about this notice one morning, I almost fainted, for I said to myself, "Alas! now they will take everybody, even men who have been fathers of families for years; I am lost." Then Father Goulden poured water over my head and neck to recover me; but my arms hung quite listless by my sides, and I was as pale as death.

It appears that I was not the only person on whom a similar effect was produced by this notice. In that year many young men absolutely refused to go, some broke their teeth so that they should not be able to bite cartridges; others shot away their thumbs with pistols so that they would not be able to handle muskets, while others ran away into the forests; they called these refractory persons, but the police were not fleet enough to run after them. And the mothers of families also found courage to revolt, and persuaded their boys to refuse to give obedience to the authorities. They declaimed against the emperor, and the clergymen of all denominations took their side, for the measure was full to overflowing. On the same day on which the notice was issued, I went over to Quatre Vents, but this time I was far from being joyful in my heart. My countenance was most unhappy; I seemed to be like one whose love and life were being taken from him. My legs would hardly carry me, and when at last I arrived, not knowing how I should

tell the sorrowful tale, I saw that everything was already known in the house, for Catherine was weeping and Aunt Grethel was both sorrowful and indignant.

We embraced in silence, and then Aunt Grethel, having pushed back her grey hair angrily behind her ears, said, "You shall not go, what are all these wars to us? The curé himself says that it is far too bad, and that peace ought to be made. You shall stay. Do not cry, Catherine, for I tell you he shall stay." She appeared quite green with anger, and threw about the furniture as she spoke, and then she continued, "For a long time I have been disgusted at this state of things. Our two poor cousins, Gasper and Yokel, have already gone, and their bones have been broken in Spain for the emperor, and now he comes and wants more boys. He is not contented with causing the death of 300,000 in Russia. Instead of letting his thoughts dwell on peace, like a sensible man, he only thinks how he can massacre the last that remain. But we shall see. We shall see."

"For heaven's sake, Aunt Grethel," I said, "be quiet and speak lower. Look at the window, you may be overheard, and then we shall all be ruined."

But she replied, "I am speaking in order that they may hear me. As for your Napoleon, I do not fear him; he stopped us from speaking out at first, so that he might do as he wished, but there must be an end to it now. In this village alone four young women are going to lose their husbands, and ten poor boys have to leave their all behind them, even their father and mother, in spite of justice and of God and of religion. Is it not shameful?"

I was going to reply, but she broke out again, and said, "Look here, Joseph, you had better say nothing. The emperor is a man without a heart, and he will come to a bad end. The Lord has already shown his hand this winter, for He saw that men feared a man more than they feared Him, and even as in the days of Herod, mothers no longer dared to keep their children when they were demanded for massacre, therefore God caused a cold to come upon our army, it perished . . . and all those who are going are dead men already. The Lord himself is weary. But you shall not go," she continued, after great agitation. "You shall go and hide in the forest with Jean Kraft, Louis Beme, and all the bravest lads in the place. You shall cross the hills and go to Switzerland, and Catherine and I will come and join you there, and wait until this work of extermination is finished." At last Aunt Grethel was silent. We had

no ordinary dinner that day, for a better feast had been prepared than even on the previous Sunday, and, before we began, she said very firmly, "Eat, my children, and fear not, there will be a change in all things soon."

About four o'clock in the afternoon I went back to Phalsbourg, feeling rather calmer than when I set out. As I was going along the Rue de la Munitionnaire, I heard, just by the corner of the College, the sound of Harmentier's drum, and saw a large crowd assembled near him. Of course, I ran forward to hear what he had to say, and as I came up he was about to begin. He said that by a decree of the Senate of the Third, the conscription would take place on the 15th; that day was the 8th, so that I had only seven days before me, which alarmed me greatly. The crowd dispersed to the right and the left very quietly, and I went home much depressed, and told Father Goulden that the conscription would take place next Monday. "So, ho!" he said, "they are losing no time, things seem to be pressing." You may easily imagine my anxiety that day, and on the days which followed. It was impossible for me to remain in one place; I continually fancied I was fleeing from the country. I seemed to be running through the forest with the soldiers at my heels, telling me to stop. And then I pictured to myself the sorrow of Catherine and Aunt Grethel and of Father Goulden; then I would think that I was marching in the ranks with other unfortunates, and a voice kept crying, "Forward! Charge bayonets!" while whole ranks were being swept away by cannon balls. In short I was in a pitiable state. "Calm yourself, Joseph," Father Goulden said to me, "and do not allow yourself to be tormented in this way. Remember that in the whole conscription there are not ten who can in all probability give such good reasons for remaining behind as you can. The doctor would be blind indeed to pass you, and, besides, I myself will see the commandant respecting it, so make yourself easy."

Unfortunately, these cheerful words by no means relieved my anxiety. Thus I passed a whole week in great disquietude, and when Monday morning, the day for the conscription, came, I looked so pale and haggard that the parents of conscripts even envied my appearance, and wished their sons could look like I did, for they said, "That fellow has a good chance of escaping, he would fall down if you breathed upon him. Some people are born under a lucky star."

## CHAPTER VI

THE house of the Mayor of Phalsbourg on the morning of January the 15th, 1813, was surrounded by a great crowd, for the conscription was proceeding. Nowadays, it is a serious thing to draw a bad number in the conscription, and for a man to be compelled to leave his parents and his friends, his village, his oxen, and fields, to be sent God knows where, and to learn "one, two —one, two, halt; eyes right; eyes left; steady; carry arms," and all the rest of it; yes, it is no light thing. But a man comes home again, he can say to himself with confidence, "In seven years I shall find the old place and my parents, and perhaps the girl I love. I shall then have seen the world, and perhaps I may even be made a forest keeper or a gendarme." That consoles reasonable people. But in those days, when one had the misfortune to draw an unlucky number, all was over; hardly one out of every hundred ever returned. The very idea of having to go was insupportable.

That day, the men of Harberg, Garbourg, and Quatre Vents had to draw first, then those of Phalsbourg, and last of all those of Vechin and of Mittlebronn. Quite early in the morning I was up and dressed, and, leaning my elbow on the work bench, I looked out of the window at the crowd passing by. Lads in blouses, old men in cotton shirts, old women in woollen skirts and bodices, walking by, with their heads bent, and weary faces, carrying sticks and large umbrellas in their hands. Whole families arrived together. The deputy Mayor of Sarrebourg, with a silver coat collar, and his clerk, who came to the Red Bull hotel the night before, were also looking out of the window. About eight o'clock, after breakfast, Father Goulden settled down to work. As for me, I could eat nothing. I was still looking out of the window when the mayor with his deputy came to fetch the sub-prefect.

At nine o'clock the drawing began, and at last we heard the clarionette of Piper Karl and the fiddle of tall Andres sounding in the streets. They were playing the Swedish march, and to that same tune thousands of poor fellows had marched away to

Alsace. The conscripts swaggered along, arm in arm, shouting loudly enough to pierce the clouds, kicking their heels against the ground, waving their hats and trying to appear joyful, though we well knew that death was in their hearts. However, it was the fashion, and tall Andres, thin, wiry, and yellow, as he stood with his comrade, a short, stodgy man with cheeks swollen out to the very ears, reminded one of those who carry people away to the cemetery, while all the time they are gossiping on quite indifferent matters. As for me, the music and the cries made me feel most melancholy. I put on my tail coat and beaver hat to go out, when Aunt Grethel and Catherine came in, and said, "Good morning, Father Goulden, we have come for the conscription."

In a moment I saw how much Catherine had been crying, for her eyes were red, and she put her arm round my neck, while her mother stood near. Then Father Goulden said, "It will soon be time for the young men of the town to go." "Yes, Father Goulden," said Catherine, in a very weak voice, "the men of Harberg have now finished." "Very well," said he, "come, Joseph, it is your turn to go now, but be not downcast and don't alarm yourself. These drawings, you see, are only done now for the sake of form. For a long time there have been no lucky numbers, and whoever gets one is sure to have to go later. When the Council for the Revision sits we shall see what is the best thing to do. To-day it is a kind of satisfaction which they allow the people by letting them draw lots, although everybody loses."

"All the same," said Aunt Grethel, "Joseph will be sure to win." "Yes, yes," replied Father Goulden, with a smile, "nobody can doubt that." Then I went out with Catherine and her mother, and walked along the street to the great square where the crowd was assembled. In all the shops conscripts by the dozens were buying ribbons and jostling each other round the counters, and one could see they were crying, while they shouted out songs like men possessed. Others were embracing each other and sobbing, but even these went on singing. Two or three bands from the neighbouring districts had come in, that of the Bohemian Waldteufel, of Rossel Kasten and of George Adam, and they played one against the other other with a noise which was horrible and discordant. Catherine held me tightly by the arm, and Aunt Grethel followed. In front of the barracks I saw pedlar Pinacle, his pack was lying open upon a table, and close to him was a stick hung with ribbons, which he was selling

to the conscripts. I hastened to pass him, but he called out for me, " Ah, limper, come here, for I have got a fine ribbon for you. You must have a really beautiful one, the ribbon of the man who wins," and with this, he waved a big black ribbon over his head. As for me, I turned pale in spite of every effort. As we went up the steps of the mayor's house we met a conscript just coming down. It was Klipfel, the blacksmith, who lived near the French Gate; he had drawn No. 8, and called out from afar, " Pinacle, the black ribbon, bring it here at no matter what price." His face was very dark, though he pretended to laugh. His little brother Jean was sobbing behind him, and called out to him, " No, no, do not buy the black ribbon," but Pinacle was by this time fastening the black ribbon to the conscript's hat, and Klipfel said, " That is all right, all that join now are dead men, and we ought to go into mourning for ourselves," and then in a savage voice he cried out, " Vive l'Empereur." I was better pleased to see the black ribbon on his hat than on my own, and I ran quickly through the crowd to escape Pinacle. It was the greatest difficulty in the world for us to get inside the porch of the mayor's house, and to reach the old wooden staircase, where people were running up and down like ants. In the large hall at the top, Gendarme Kelz was marching to and fro and keeping order as best he could. At the side, in the council chamber, there was a painted figure of Justice with her eyes blindfolded, and we could hear them calling out the numbers. From time to time a conscript ran out, his cheeks fiery red, with the number in his hat, his head down like a savage bull that cannot see where it is going, and would like to break its horns against the wall. Others again came out as pale as death. The windows of the house were opened and five or six bands outside were playing all at once. It was really dreadful. We had to wait a long time, and I seemed to have no blood left in my veins, when suddenly I heard my name called. I went without seeing or hearing anything, put my hand into the bowl, drew out a number, which the sub-prefect looked at, and said, " No. 17." With this I went away without saying a word, and Catherine and her aunt walked behind. We went along the square, and when I had recovered myself in the open air, I remembered the number which I had drawn. Aunt Grethel seemed to be quite stupefied. " I put something into your pocket," she said, " but the rascal Pinacle has crossed your luck for you." And, as she spoke, she pulled forth a piece of cord from my pocket. The perspiration stood on my brow in great

drops, Catherine was deadly pale, and in this state we reached Father Goulden's. He inquired at once what number I had drawn. "Seventeen," said Aunt Grethel, sitting down with her hands on her knees. Father Goulden for the moment looked confounded, then he said, "One number is as good as another, as all will have to go. That will make no difference to Joseph I will go and see the mayor and the commandant. Mark you, I will not tell lies, but I will say Joseph is lame, and all the town knows it, but in the hurry of things it was overlooked. That is what I shall say when I see them, so don't distress yourself, but keep up your courage." M. Goulden, with these words, re assured Aunt Grethel and Catherine, and they went back more full of hope than when they arrived. But I felt no hope; from that moment I had no peace day or night.

There was one good habit which the emperor had, he did not let the conscripts linger at home. Soon after the drawing came the Council of Revision, and then they were told to march. He was not like those dentists, who first look at the pincers and instruments and then examine your mouth for such a long time that you feel ill before they have made up their minds what to do. He was in the habit of going to work at once. A week after the drawing, the Council of Revision sat in the town hall, with all the mayors from the neighbourhood and other worthies to assist. M. Goulden had put on his brown overcoat and his grand wig the previous day in order to wind up the clock at the houses of the mayor and the commandant, and when he returned, he came with a smiling face, and said to me, "It is all right, the mayor and commandant both knew that you are lame, and they both said to me, 'M. Goulden, we know that young man is lame, you need not trouble to speak about him. We do not want cripples for soldiers.'" These words of comfort seemed to pour balm upon my heart, and happy sleep came to me that night. On the following day my fears returned, for I remembered how many people suffering from defects of all kinds had been compelled to go. And how many others had even inflicted defects for the purpose of deceiving the council. Some, for example, had swallowed unwholesome things to make their faces pale, or had tied up one of their limbs to make their veins swell, and some pretended to be deaf or blind or insane. Remembering these things, I trembled lest my lameness should not be sufficient, and I determined that I should have a pale face also. Some one had told me that vinegar would produce this effect, and without saying anything to anybody, in my

terror I swallowed all the vinegar that remained in the cruet stand. After this I thought I should look as pale as a corpse out of his grave, for the vinegar was very powerful, as I could feel. But when Father Goulden saw me, he looked and cried, "What is the matter with you, Joseph? You are as red as a turkey cock," and then I looked at myself in the glass, and saw that I was red to the very tips of my ears and to the end of my nose. Naturally this frightened me, and, instead of growing pale, I became redder than before, and cried in despair, "Now, everything is lost; I shall look like a man who is in the best of health. It is the vinegar that has done it." "What vinegar?" said Father Goulden.

"Why, the vinegar that I drank to make myself look pale, as they say the organist, Mlle. Schlapp, does. Heavens, what a foolish thing it was for me to do."

"But," said Father Goulden, "that won't stop you being lame. You see you tried to deceive the council, and that was not honest, Joseph. It is now half-past nine, and Werner told me yesterday that your turn would be at ten o'clock, so you must make haste." Therefore I had to go in the state I was then in, with my cheeks burning. When I met Catherine and her mother at the mayor's house, they hardly knew me. Aunt Grethel cried, "What a merry brisk look you have." I could have fainted when I heard that, if the vinegar had not supported me in spite of myself. I went up the steps in very great trouble, I could hardly open my lips, so angry was I with my foolishness. Upstairs there were more than twenty-five conscripts who declared themselves unfit, and twenty-five more were sitting on the seats by the wall, with downcast looks and pale cheeks, waiting for their turn. Old Kelz, the gendarme, with his three-cornered hat, was walking about, and when he saw me he said, as if in astonishment, "Come, come, this is well! At any rate, here is one who is not sorry to go; a love of glory is shining in your eyes." With that he slapped me on the shoulder. "That is the way, Joseph, I predict that you will be a corporal before the end of the campaign." "But I am lame," I cried angrily. "Lame," said Kelz, winking his eye and smiling, "that does not matter, with such a face as that one always makes one's way." He had hardly finished speaking, when the door of the revision chamber opened, and the gendarme, Werner, put out his head, and called in a gruff voice, "Joseph Bertha." I went in, and limped as much as I could, and the door was shut behind me. The mayors

were sitting round in a semicircle, and the sub-prefect and the Mayor of Phalsbourg were in their midst. The secretary Frelag was at the table. A conscript from Herberg was putting on his clothes, and the gendarme Descarnes was helping him. This conscript, with his long dark hair hanging over his eyes, bare neck, and open mouth, heaved great sighs, looking like a man about to be hanged. Two doctors, the sergeant-major from the hospital and another dressed in uniform, were talking together in the centre of the room. Then they examined me, and the sub-prefect said, "The young fellow is in excellent health." The words made me feel angry, but I civilly replied, "I am lame, M. Prefect." Then the two sergeants looked at me, the one from the hospital, who had been spoken to concerning me, remarked, "The left leg is a little shorter."

"Bah! bah!" said the other, "he is sound enough." Then he put his hand on my chest, and said it was well developed, and told me to cough. I coughed as well as I could, but he found all the same that my chest was quite strong, and then he said, "See, the colour of his skin, he must have an excellent circulation." Then I saw that they would make me go, if I did not say something for myself, so I spoke up and said, "I have been drinking vinegar."

"Indeed," he said, "that shows you must have an excellent digestion, if you are so fond of vinegar."

In despair I said that I was lame also.

"Don't be downcast about that, I will answer that your leg is sound enough."

Then the mayor spoke up and said, "But that does not alter the fact that this young man has been lame from his birth. It is a fact that is well known to all in the town."

"Certainly," said the hospital doctor, "the left leg is a little short, it looks like a case for examination."

Then the mayor said, "Yes, I am sure the boy could not bear a long march; he would be left behind the second day."

The other doctor said no more, and I thought I had escaped, when the prefect said, "You are Joseph Bertha, are you not?" And I replied that I was.

"Then, gentlemen," said he, taking a letter from his pocket "listen," and he then read the letter that stated that, six months before, I had gone to Saverne and back faster than Pinacle, that we had run the distance together in less than three hours, and I had won the bet. Unhappily, it was true. That

rascal Pinacle was always calling me the limper, and in my anger I had made the bet. As everybody knew it, I could not deny it. I stood speechless, and the doctor said, "This seems to settle the question, dress yourself." And the other doctor said, "He is quite fit for service."

So I put on my clothes, feeling horribly dismayed. The next man was called in by Werner, and I paid no attention to anything more. Somebody was helping me on with my coat; I found myself on the staircase, and when Catherine asked what had happened I sobbed terribly, and should have fallen downstairs had not Aunt Grethel held me. We went out by a side-door, and walked across the square. Catherine and I were crying like children. In the porch, in the shade, we stood still and embraced, while Aunt Grethel cried out, "Oh, the villains—they carry off even the lame man. They want everything. They will come, let them come, and take us."

People were surrounding us, and Sepel, the butcher, who was chopping his meat on the block, said, "For heaven's sake be quiet, Mother Grethel, you may be put into prison for your words."

"Let them take me there; let them massacre me; I declare that men must be cowards to allow such horrors to exist."

As the gendarme came along, we went away together crying. We turned the corner of the Café Hemmere, and went home. People were looking at us from the windows, and saying to each other, "There is another going off."

Father Goulden, who knew that Aunt Grethel and Catherine would come back to dine with us that day, had ordered in from the tavern of the Ram a stuffed goose and two bottles of fine Alsatian wine. He had quite made up his mind that I should be excused. Imagine, then, his astonishment when he saw us in such a state of despair.

"What does all this mean?" he said, pushing his black cap from his bald head, and gazing at us with open eyes.

For myself, I had not the strength to reply. I threw myself into a chair, weeping. Catherine sat with me, and put her arms round my neck, and sobbed with me. Aunt Grethel remarked, "The rascals have taken him."

"Impossible," said Father Goulden, and his arms fell by his sides.

"It is the most abominable thing I have ever seen," said Aunt Grethel. "It exposes the wickedness of these people." And she became more and more excited, and cried: "Will there be

another revolution? Are these rascals to be our masters always."

"Come, come," said Father Goulden, "be calm, Mother Grethel, for God's sake don't cry so loudly. Now, Joseph, tell us quietly what happened. There must have been a mistake, that is the only way it could have happened. Did not the mayor or the doctor say anything for you?"

Then, with a sigh, I told him the story, and Aunt Grethel, who knew nothing about it, wrung her hands, and cried out: "Oh! the rascal. I pray heaven he may come to my house once again, I will split his head open with my axe."

As for Father Goulden, he seemed to be in a state of stupefaction. "Why did you not deny it?" he said. "Was it true?" and as I only hung my head without replying, he said: "Ah! youth! youth! how thoughtless it is. . . . What imprudence!" and then he walked round and round the room, and sat down, wiping his spectacles, and Aunt Grethel said: "Yes, but after all they shall not have him; their tricks shall do them no good, for this very evening Joseph shall be on his way across the hills to Lurp."

Then Father Goulden knitted his brows, and after a short pause, he said: "This is a great misfortune, for Joseph is really lame, as will be seen before very long. He could not march many days before falling out, but you are wrong, Aunt Grethel, to talk in this way and to give such advice."

"Such advice," she exclaimed, "then are you also in favour of massacring people?"

"No," he replied, "I do not like wars, and most of all do I hate those wars in which hundreds of thousands of men are killed for the glory of one man, but the wars of that kind are now over. Soldiers are now being taken, not to gain glory or to conquer every people, but to defend our own country, the safety of which has been threatened by our enemies. They would be very glad to have peace now. But, unfortunately, the Russians are advancing together with the Prussians, and our friends the Austrians are only awaiting their chance to pounce on us. We shall soon have all Europe upon us, as we had in 1798. This is very different from our wars with Russia, Spain, and Germany. Even as old as I am, Aunt Grethel, if the danger increases and the veterans of the republic are wanted, I should be ashamed to go and hide in Switzerland, while others were giving their blood for their country. And besides, Joseph would then be a deserter, and after playing such a trick no man would be respected any-

where. He could no longer have father, mother, church, or country, having shown himself unable to fulfil the first of all duties—that of defending his own country, even if that country be in the wrong." He said no more at the time, but sat down at the table with a sad face. After a moment's silence, he said, "We will dine, it is twelve o'clock."

And Aunt Grethel and Catherine sat down, and we ate our dinner.

I pondered over the words of Father Goulden, which seemed to me to be quite reasonable. Aunt Grethel bit her lips, and looked across at me from time to time to see what I was thinking about.

Finally she said, "As for me, I do not care for a country where they take away fathers of families, after having carried off the sons. If I were Joseph, I would run away."

I said, "Aunt Grethel, you know I love nothing so well as peace, but I should not like to run away into another country like an alien or a vagabond, but I will do exactly as Catherine wishes. If she says she wishes me to go to Switzerland, then I will go."

Then Catherine held her head down to hide her tears, and said in a low voice, "I do not think I should like them to call you a deserter."

"That settles it," I replied. "I will do as the rest do. As Phalsbourg men and the Dagsberg men are going to the war, I will go, too."

Father Goulden only said, "Everybody must judge for himself, and I am glad Joseph agrees with me."

Then silence fell, it was nearly two o'clock before Aunt Grethel rose up and took her basket. She seemed sorrowful, and said to me, "You will not listen to my advice, but it is all the same, if God pleases there will be an end of this: you will come back again if it be His will, and Catherine shall wait for you."

As for Catherine, she threw her arms about my neck and wept, and I wept even more than she did. And Father Goulden himself could not help shedding some tears.

At last Catherine and her mother went down, and I heard my aunt calling to me, "Try and see me, Joseph, once before you go."

I said that I would and shut the door. But I could hardly stand upright. Never before in all my life had I felt so miserable, and even to this day when I think of it, it makes my heart stand still.

## CHAPTER VII

From that day onward I had no head left for anything. At first I tried to go back to work, but my thoughts were always wandering; and M. Goulden said to me, "Let it alone, Joseph. Make what use you can of the little time you still have with us. Go and see Catherine and Aunt Grethel. I am always thinking they will exempt you; but how can one be sure? There's such a scarcity of men that it may be a very long process."

Therefore I used to go every morning to Quatre Vents to pass my days with Catherine. We were very sad, and yet we were glad enough to see each other, for we loved one another, if possible, more than ever. Catherine sometimes tried to sing, as she used to do in the good old times; but all at once she would break out crying. Then we would weep together, and Aunt Grethel would curse the wars that made everybody unhappy. She said that the Council of Revision deserved hanging, and that all these rogues were leagued together to injure people's lives. It consoled us a little to hear her, and we agreed that she was quite right.

At night I used to go back to the town about eight or nine o'clock, when they shut the gates; and as I passed by, all the taverns were full of conscripts and of veteran soldiers drinking together. The conscripts always paid; and the veterans, with their greasy regulation caps on one ear, their red noses, and their horsehair stocks instead of shirt collars, sat pulling at their moustachios, and relating in a majestic manner stories of battles, marches, and duels.

They were unsightly places, these holes full of smoke, with the lamps hanging from the blackened beams, and the old swaggerers and the young fellows drinking together, shouting and beating the tables like blind men; and behind, in the shadows, old Annette Schnaps or Marie Héring, with their hair in a knot at the back of the neck, and a three-toothed comb stuck across it, looking on with their arms akimbo, or drinking a glass to the health of the brave fellows.

It was a sad thing for these young men, sons of peasants, of honest and hardworking people, to be leading such a life; but no

one thought of working any more; a man did not value his life at two sous. After a great deal of shouting, drinking, and silent despair, the youngsters would fall asleep with their faces on the table, and the old ones emptied the jugs, singing–

"The voice of glory calls us!"

When I saw these things, I praised heaven in all my misery for giving me respectable people for friends, who kept up my courage, and prevented me from falling into such hands.

This went on till the 25th January. For some days before that, a number of Italian, Piedmontese, and Genoese conscripts had been coming into the town; some of them stout and plump, like Savoyards fed on chestnuts, with tall, pointed hats on their curly hair, moleskin breeches dyed a dark green, and short jackets of moleskin of a bright red colour, fastened round their waists with a leather belt. They wore very large shoes, and ate great pieces of cheese, sitting in a row all along the side of the old market-hall. The others, thin, withered, and dark, shivered in their long overcoats at the very sight of snow on the roofs, and looked at the women who passed by with their great mournful black eyes. They were drilled every day in the great square; for they were to fill up the 6th Regiment of the line at Mayence, and were taking a little rest in the barracks.

The captain of the recruits, named Vidal, lodged just over our room. He was a burly, square-built man, very firm, but kind-hearted and civil. He came to us to have his watch mended, and when he heard that I was a conscript, and that I was afraid of never coming home again, he encouraged me and told me it was nothing but habit, that after five or six months a man fought and marched as easily as he ate soup; and that many even got so accustomed to shooting with muskets and cannon at people that they became quite unhappy if they were deprived of that enjoyment. But his sort of reasoning was not at all to my taste, especially as I saw five or six great marks of powder on one of his cheeks.

The stains had gone very deeply into the skin, and he told me that they came from a musket that a Russian had fired off at him almost under his nose. My profession became hateful to me; and as several days had passed by, and there had been no inquiry after me, I began to think, perhaps, that I had been forgotten, like big Chevre-Hof, of whom they speak to this day, because of his extraordinary luck. Aunt Grethel herself said,

every time we went to see them, "Well, well, are they going to let us alone, after all?" But on the morning of that 25th of January, just as I was going to start for Quatre Vents, M. Goulden, who sat working at his table with an absent air, turned round with tears in his eyes, and said to me, "Joseph, my boy, I thought it better to let you sleep quietly last night, but there is something that you must be told. Last evening the brigadier of the gendarmes came and brought me your route. You are to go with the Piedmontese and the Genoese, and five or six young fellows of this town—young Klipfel, young Loerig, Jean Furst, and Gaspard Zebedee; and you are to start for Mayence."

When I heard this, I felt my legs give way under me, and I sat down, unable to speak a word. M. Goulden took from his drawer the route summons, which was in a fine clear writing, and began to read it slowly to me. All that I remember of it is, that Joseph Bertha, a native of Dabo, in the canton of Phalsbourg, in the arrondissement of Sarrebourg, was incorporated in the 6th Regiment of the line, and that he was to join his corps at Mayence by the 29th of January.

This letter affected me as much as if I had not known anything about it before. I looked upon it as something quite new, and felt indignant.

After an interval of silence, M. Goulden said, "You are to start to-day."

Then I seemed to awake from a bad dream, and cried out, "But I have not seen Catherine again?"

"Yes, Joseph, yes," he answered, with a trembling voice. "I have sent to let Aunt Grethel and Catherine know; and they are coming, and you shall embrace them before you set out."

I saw how sad he was, and was more moved than ever, so that I had all the trouble in the world to keep from bursting into tears.

After a minute or so, M. Goulden said, "You need not trouble yourself about anything. I have arranged it all. And when you come back, Joseph, if God should grant you life, you will always find me the same. I am beginning to grow old, and my greatest happiness would have been to keep you here like a son. For I have found in you the good heart and the mind of an honest man. I should have left you what I have—we should have got on together. Catherine and you would have been like children to me. But as things are, let us be resigned. It is all but for a time; you will be exempted, I am sure; for they will soon see you cannot make long marches."

While he spoke, I sat with head bowed down and sobbed quietly.

At last he got up, and took from his cupboard a soldier's knapsack of cowhide, which he placed on the table. I stared at it blankly, thinking of nothing but the misery of parting. "Here's your knapsack," he said, "I have put into it everything you will want—two linen shirts, two flannel waistcoats, and all the rest. You will receive two shirts at Mayence, and that is all you will want; but I have had shoes made for you, for there is nothing worse than the shoes provided by the contractors; they are nearly always made of horse-leather, and are terribly hot to the feet. You are not very strong on your legs at any time, my boy, and at any rate you shall not have that additional suffering—that's all." So he put the knapsack down on the table, and sat down again.

Outside, we could hear the Italians running to and fro, preparing for a start. Over our heads Captain Vidal was giving orders. His horse was at the gendarmes' quarters, and he was telling his orderly to see if his horse was properly shod, and had had his corn. All the noise and bustle had a strange effect upon me, and I could not realise to myself that I had to leave the town. While I was thus in the greatest trouble the door opened, and Catherine threw herself into my arms, and Aunt Grethel cried: "Did I not tell you to go away into Switzerland—that these rascals would carry you off after all—did I not tell you so? And you would not believe me!"

"Mother Grethel," M. Goulden answered quickly, "to go away to do one's duty is not so great a misfortune as to be despised by all honest men. Instead of all these cries and reproaches, which do no good, it would be better if you tried to console and to sustain Joseph."

"Oh!" she replied, "I am not reproaching him—no, no, though it is horrible to see such doings!"

Catherine never moved from my side; she sat down, and we embraced each other.

"You will come back?" she whispered as she pressed me to her. "Yes, yes," I replied in the same tone, "and you will always think of me—you will never love any one else?"

Then she said with many sobs, "No, I will never love any one but you."

This had been going on for a quarter of an hour, when the door opened, and Captain Vidal came in with his cloak rolled round his shoulders like a hunting horn.

"Well," said he, "well, and where's our young man?"

"Here he is," answered M. Goulden.

"Ah, I see," said the captain, "they are sorrowing together—that is natural enough. I remember my own case. We all leave somebody at home."

Then raising his voice, he proceeded: "Come, come, young man, courage! Parbleu! you are not a child."

Then he looked at Catherine, and said to M. Goulden, "After all, I can understand that he doesn't like to go."

By this time the drums were beating at the corner of every street, and Captain Vidal added: "We have still twenty minutes to prepare." And with a sharp look at me he said: "Young man, don't fail to answer to the first call."

Then he shook M. Goulden's hand, and went out. We heard his horse snorting at the door.

It was a dull heavy day. I felt overwhelmed with sadness; and I could not tear myself from Catherine.

All at once a great rolling of drums was heard. The drummers had assembled in the great square.

M. Goulden immediately taking the knapsack from the table, said in a solemn tone, "Joseph, let us say good-bye—it is time." I stood up as pale as death. He fastened the knapsack on my shoulders. Catherine sat with her face hidden in her apron, sobbing. Aunt Grethel stood looking at me with her lips pressed tightly together.

The rolling of the drums went on for a time; but suddenly it stopped.

"The roll-call is just going to begin," said Father Goulden, and he embraced me. Then all at once his composure gave way, and he burst out crying. He called me his child in a low tone, and added in a whisper: "Courage!"

Aunt Grethel sank down in a chair, and as I bent towards her to embrace her, she took my head between her two hands, and, holding me thus, cried out: "I always loved you, Joseph, since you were a child—I always loved you! You have given us nothing but pleasure, and now you have to go away! My God! my God! what a misfortune!"

As for me, I could weep no more.

When Aunt Grethel let me go I looked at Catherine, who never moved. I went up to her and kissed her neck. She did not move, and I was going away quickly, feeling that all my strength was leaving me, when she called after me in a heart-rending voice, "Joseph! Joseph!"

Then I turned back; we rushed into each other's arms, and for some moments we remained thus, sobbing. Catherine had lost all control over herself. I put her down in an armchair, and went out without turning to look again.

I was already in the great square, among the Italians and a crowd of people, who wept and lamented as they escorted their young men; but I saw nothing and heard nothing.

When the rolling of the drums began again I looked up, and saw that I was between Klipfel and Furst, each of whom had a knapsack at his back; their parents and relations were in the square, crying as if it had been a funeral. To the right, near the council house, Captain Vidal, mounted on his little grey mare, was chatting with two infantry officers. The sergeants were calling the roll, and the men answering to their names, Furst, Klipfel, and Bertha were called, and we answered like the rest. Then the captain commanded "March!" and we went away two and two towards the French Gate.

At the corner where the baker Spitz lived, an old woman in the first story called out in a broken voice, "Kasper! Kasper!"

It was Zebedee's grandmother. Her chin trembled. Zebedee waved his hand without replying; he also was very sorrowful, and marched with his head down.

For me I was already trembling at the thought of passing our house. When I came opposite my knees trembled. I heard somebody calling to me from the windows, but I turned my head in the direction of the Red Bull; the sound of the drums drowned everything.

The children of the town ran after us, crying, "Look! there they are, going away! Look! there's Klipfel! there's Joseph!"

Under the French Gate the sentries on guard, ranged in a line, looked at us when we went by, with their arms shouldered. We passed the out-post, and then the drums ceased beating, and we turned to the right.

All we could hear was the noise of our footfalls in the mud, for the snow was melting. We went past Aebershoff Farm, and were about to descend by the side of the large bridge, when somebody spoke to me. It was the captain, who called me to him and said, "That is right, conscript, I am proud of you."

On hearing that, I could not refrain from weeping, and the burly Furst did the same. As we marched, we sobbed, though others, as pale as death, spoke not a word. At the great bridge Zebedee began to smoke his pipe. The Italians in front were

laughing and chaffing, for they had been used to this life for some weeks, and knew what it was.

From the summit of the hill near Metting, a league from the town, we began to descend, and Klipfel, touching me, told me to look down on the view.

I did so, and saw Phalsbourg far below us, with its barracks, its arsenal, and the church tower from which I had seen Catherine's house some weeks before, when with old Brainstein. How grey everything looked! The forests seemed black. I should like to have remained there, but the regiment marched on, and we proceeded to Metting.

## CHAPTER VIII

That day we went as far as Bitche, and the next day to Hornbach, and then on to Kaiserlautern. The weather had by this time become snowy. Many and many a time during this long march I wished that I had Father Goulden's warm coat and thick boots. Through many villages we passed, then over the mountains, and down across plains. Whenever we entered a town, the drummers began to beat the march, and we held up our heads, and kept step, to look quite like veteran warriors. How the people would come to their little windows, or stand on the doorsteps, calling out, "Here are the conscripts!" And at night-time, when we rested, how glad we were, for our feet were very weary. My leg had not hurt me much, but I was foot-sore, and never had I felt so tired as then. Our billeting tickets gave us a right to claim a seat by the fire, and the people usually gave us a place at their table. As a rule we had skim milk and potatoes, and sometimes there were large dishes of saurkraut, with slices of bacon placed on them. The children would come and gaze upon us, and the old women ask us what country we came from, and what was our work. Many of the girls looked at us in a sad way, thinking of their own sweethearts, who had been taken away many months before. Sometimes we were shown the bed of an absent son. How glad I was to lie down! I could have slept the clock round, but as soon as the day began to break, the rolling of the drums aroused me, and then I would stare at the brown ceilings and at the little window panes, and say to myself, "Where can I be?" and then my heart would grow cold, as I answered to my own inquiry, "You are a conscript, and you are at Kaiserlautern or at Bitche." Then I had to dress very quickly, buckle on my knapsack, and run and answer my name at the roll-call. Sometimes the good woman of the house would wish us a happy journey, and we thanked her as we went away.

Yes, a happy journey truly! You will never see those poor fellows again. How many have travelled before them along the same road! I shall never forget how, at Kaiserlautern, on opening my knapsack for some fresh clothes, the second day after leaving home, I found fifty-four francs, mostly in golden

pieces, and on the paper Father Goulden had written, "Always be good and honest during the war; remember your relations and all those for whom you would willingly lay down your life. Treat all strangers kindly, so that they will act in the same way towards our own people, and may God preserve you, and spare you from peril. Here is some money, Joseph, which is good for you to have, when you are away from your own friends. Write to us as often as possible. My boy, I embrace you, and love you with all my heart." When I read this, I shed tears as I thought, "Joseph, you are not quite forsaken in this world, you have those who love you, and you must never forget the good advice they give you."

About ten o'clock at night on the fifth day we entered Mayence; the remembrance of it will remain with me till I die. The cold was intense, and we had had to start early in the morning. Long before we reached the city, we passed through villages full of soldiers, horse and foot. Dragoons in short jackets, straw stuffed into their wooden shoes, were trying to break the ice to water their horses; others were dragging trusses of hay to the stable doors. Ammunition was being carried in waggons all along the road, white with frost. Couriers, artillerymen, and engineers were going about the country in the snow, taking no more notice of us than if we had not been alive.

Captain Vidal had got off his horse in order to warm himself, and was walking about briskly. The other officers and sergeants hurried us up because we were late. Some Italians stayed behind in a village, and could not proceed any further. I was extremely foot-sore; after our last stopping-place I had hardly been able to move. The other men from Phalsbourg marched well. It was night; the sky was filled with stars. All our men were looking out and saying to each other, "At last we are getting near." For on the horizon we saw the dark outline and gleaming spires, indicating a large town. At length the outworks were reached, zigzag mounds of earth, and then we had to keep step and silence. At the corner of one of the forts we saw the town moat, which was covered with ice, the ramparts rose about it, and opposite us was an old gate with a drawbridge raised.

A sentinel, with levelled musket, cried, "Who goes there?" The captain, advancing by himself, replied, "France." "What regiment?" "Recruits of the 6th Regiment of the line." Then there was silence again, and the drawbridge was let down, and the men of the guard came forward to look at us. One

of them carried a large torch. Captain Vidal was a little ahead with the commander of the fort, and then someone cried out, "As soon as you please." The drums struck up a merry march, but the captain told them to shoulder their drums. We entered across a large bridge, and through a second gate like the first, and then we were in the town, the streets of which were paved with large shining cobbles. We all did our best not to limp, for, although it was night, the wine-shops and other houses were open, and hundreds of people were walking about as if it were day.

We marched through several streets, and soon reached a square in front of tall barracks, where we were told to halt. At one end of the barracks, there was an arched doorway, and here an old woman sat at a table under a large three-coloured umbrella hung with lanterns. Then several officers arrived, among them being the Commandant Gemeau. They shook hands laughing, then they looked at us, and the roll-call was gone through. After this, we received a piece of soldier's bread, and a billeting ticket. We were told to muster at eight o'clock next morning, when we should receive our weapons, and at last the word of dismissal was given. The officers went along the street to the left into a big café, up a flight of many steps, but where could we go with our tickets, in the midst of a town such as this, especially the Italians who could speak no German or French. At last I thought I would go and ask the old woman under the umbrella. She was an old Alsatian with a round, merry face, and I asked her where the Capuzigner-strasse was. She laughed and replied, "What will you pay to know?" I was obliged to drink a glass of cognac with her, and then she said, "Look, just in front of you, if you turn down that corner to the right, you will see the Capuzigner-strasse. Good night, conscripts," and she laughed.

Furst and Zebedee also had a ticket for the same street, so we went together. Furst was soon able to find his place, but the house was closed, and while he was knocking at the door I found mine, for two of its windows were shining near our left hand. I pushed the door, and it opened, so I entered a dark passage, where there was a strong smell of new bread, which made me rejoice. Zebedee went on farther, and I called along the passage, "Is nobody here?" Thereupon an old woman appeared, shading a candle with her hand, at the top of a wooden staircase. She asked what we wanted, and I told her we had a billeting ticket for the house. Thereupon she came

down and looked at the paper, and said to me in German, "Come." I went upstairs, and in passing I saw there was an open door with two men half-dressed kneading dough at two troughs. It was a baker's house, and that was why the old woman was assisting in the work so late. She had on a cap with black ribbons, bare arms, and a skirt of blue wool, and seemed to be very much out of spirits. But she took me to a good-sized room with a large stove, and a bed at the end of the room. "You are late," said she. I answered, "Yes, we have been on the march all day, I can hardly stand for weariness." And as she looked at me, I heard her sigh and say, "Poor boy!" Then she made me sit down by the stove, and she asked me if I was foot-sore. I told her I had been for three days. "Very well," she said, "take off your shoes, and put on these sabots. I will come back soon." With this she left her candle on the table, and went down. I put down my knapsack, and took off my shoes, as directed, when I found that my feet were very much blistered, and good heavens, how they pained me! A thought came into my head that it would be better to die at once. This idea had recurred a hundred times during the march, but now with a good fire before me, I felt wretched and weary, and longed to sleep and sleep for ever, in spite of Catherine, and Aunt Grethel, and Father Goulden, and all my friends. I was truly wretched. While I was thus pondering over these things, the door opened and a tall burly grizzly man entered, one of the two I had seen working down below. He had put on a jacket, and in his hand was a jug and two glasses. He wished me good evening, so I bowed. Then the old woman came in carrying a wooden tub, which she placed on the ground, and asked if I would bathe my feet. This quite affected me, and I told myself, "After all, there are many good people in the world." My blisters were bleeding as I bathed them, and the poor old woman kept muttering, "Poor boy, poor boy," while the man inquired where I came from. I replied, "From Phalsbourg in Lorraine."

"Very good," he replied, and then, a little later on, he said to his wife, "Go and fetch one of our cakes, then let him drink a glass of wine, and rest in peace, for he wants sleep." He put the table before me, so that my feet were still in the tub. The jug was in front of us, and he filled our glasses with sparkling wine, and drank my health. The woman had gone down, but she soon came back with a large warm cake covered with fresh butter, only half melted. I felt quite hungry, in fact almost

ill, and these good people must have observed it, for the woman said to me, " Before eating, my child, take your feet out of the water." She wiped them with her apron before I knew what she was about, and I cried, " Oh, madame, you treat me as your own child." And then she quietly said, " We ourselves have a son in the army," and as she said it I heard her voice tremble, and my heart bled in silence, for I thought of Catherine and Aunt Grethel, and never a word could I say. The husband told me to eat and drink, and I ate the cake up with a pleasure I had never known before. They were both looking at me very gravely, and when I had done, the man said, " Yes, we have a son in the army. He went away to Russia last year, but we have had no news from him. How terrible is war! " He seemed to speak to himself, walking up and down absent-mindedly, with his hands crossed behind him. My eyes were almost closed with want of sleep, so the man said, " Come, good night," and with this he went away, and the woman followed him with the tub. I cried out after them, " A thousand thanks, and may God give you back your son." Then I undressed and went to bed, and was soon fast asleep.

## CHAPTER IX

It was nearly eight o'clock next morning when I woke, for a trumpet was sounding the roll-call at the corner of the street. Everything was in motion, horses, and carriages, and people were rushing about. My feet still hurt me rather, but nothing as compared with other days, and with fresh socks I seemed quite restored. I said to myself, "Joseph, if you go on like this, you will become a strong fellow. It is the first step that gives the trouble." In this pleasant state of mind I dressed. The baker's wife had put my shoes to dry in front of the stove, after filling them with ashes to stop them from shrinking; they were beautifully clean and shone nicely. I put on my knapsack and went downstairs, but I had no time to thank the good people who had looked after me so well. I intended to do this after the roll-call. At the end of the street in the square many Italians were waiting, shivering around the fountain. Klipfel, Zebedee, and others arrived directly afterwards. There was nothing to be seen on this side of the square but guns or carriages or horses being led to water by the Baden Hussars; there were some dragoons and soldiers of the commissariat among them.

The cavalry barracks in front were as high as Phalsbourg Church, and on the opposite side of the square were quaint old gabled houses with carved fronts like those at Saverne, but much higher. I had never seen anything like it before, and I stared up at them, until the drums began to beat; then everybody fell into his place. Captain Vidal came up with his cloak on his arm. Some of the waggons emerged from the archway, and then we were told, first in Italian and then in French, that arms were about to be distributed, and each one had to step out when his name was called. The waggons stopped about ten yards off, and then they began. As each one came out from the ranks he received a sabre, a cartridge-box, a bayonet, and a

musket. These were slung over our blouses, or coats, or overcoats, and with our various hats and caps we must really have looked like a band of brigands. My gun was so heavy that I could hardly carry it, while the cartridge-box hung down to my knees, until Sergeant Pinto showed me the way to make the straps shorter; he was a good man. All these straps across my chest seemed terrible to me, and then I saw that our troubles were not over, as I had imagined. Then an ammunition waggon was brought, and fifty cartridges were given to each man, which predicted anything but good. Instead of telling us to break up, and sending us back to our lodgings, as I had hoped, the captain drew his sword, and cried, "Right file! forward march!" and the drums began to beat. I was exceedingly sorry not to be able to thank my host and hostess for the kindness they had shown me, and I thought they would regard me as most ungrateful, but I was obliged to go with the rest. We went down a long crowded street, and found ourselves suddenly outside the fort and on the banks of the Rhine. On one side rose some very high mountains, and there we could see old grey ruined castles like those of Gerouldseck and the Vosges. The great river was covered with ice as far as we could see. It was a most magnificent and splendid sight. The whole of the regiment marched down to the river Rhine, which we crossed. We were not alone on the river; in front of us we saw a convoy of powder about 500 yards off, guarded by soldiers, on the way to Frankfort. The ice was not slippery, but covered with hoarfrost. On reaching the other side we continued to march for five or six hours. To the right and to the left in the hills on either side we saw villages, and Zebedee, who was next to me, said, "As we have had to go, I am just as glad it should be to the wars, for, at any rate, we shall see something new every day, and if we have the good fortune to reach home what stories we shall have to tell."

I replied that I would rather have less to tell; I would rather live for myself and others who remain quietly at home than be marching about here in the snow.

"Oh," said Zebedee, "then you do not care for glory, but there is something in glory after all."

And then I could not help answering him. "Zebedee," I said, "the glory is not for us, but for others. It is for people who live joyously and who sleep and eat well; they dance and make merry, and they get their glory into the bargain, which we win

with our sweat and blood, and by having our bones broken. Poor creatures like us are compelled to march away, and we are lucky if we get back, able to work after losing a limb; where then is the glory? Many of their old companions who were not a bit better than they, and who even did less work, have, during those past years, earned money, have opened shops, married, brought up children, and have become substantial men, and notable persons, and even councillors. And when those who go to seek glory in killing others pass with stripes on their arms, these men look at them with contempt, and, if by chance they happen to have red noses from drinking wine to keep up their courage in rain and snow in long forced marches, they say, 'These men are drunkards. These conscripts would only be too happy to be at home, for they are little more than beggars.' I do not think these things are just, and as for me, Zebedee, I wish those who love glory so much would go and find it themselves, and not leave it for others."

He laughed quietly, and replied, "To tell you the truth, I think the same as you do, but as they have got us it is better to say we are fighting for glory. It is always best to maintain one's position, and to make people believe that one is happy, even if we are not happy, Joseph; we shall get nothing by it, and they will only laugh at us."

As we proceeded to argue on these and other things, we came at last to a great river which we were told was the Maine, and near the river was a village by the roadside, the name of which I do not know, although we stayed there. We went into various houses, and bought brandy, and wine, and meat, and those who had no money chewed their crust of brown bread, and looked envious. About six o'clock in the evening we reached Frankfort, which is an older town even than Mayence, and was full of Jews. They took us to a suburb Sachsenhausen, where the 10th Hussars and some cavalry from Baden were in barracks. I heard that this old building used to be a hospital, and it looked it, for inside there was a large court yard with arches, under which the horses were stabled, the men's quarters being above.

We arrived here after marching through many lanes, so narrow that one could hardly see the sky on looking up between the rows of chimneys. Captain Florentin and the two lieutenants, Clavel and Bretonville, were awaiting us. Then the sergeant led us into the sleeping rooms near the quarters of the regiment from Baden. They were large rooms, with great windows, and

between the windows the beds were arranged in rows. Sergeant Pinto placed his lantern on a pillar in the middle of the room. Everybody quickly put his weapons into the rack, and took off his knapsack and other things. I was to share a bed with Zebedee. God knows, we were all tired enough, and in twenty minutes we were all sleeping like logs.

## CHAPTER X

It was at Frankfort that I first became acquainted with military life. Until then I had merely been a conscript, but now I became a soldier; I do not mean only by way of exercise, learning to stand "eyes right," and "eyes left," to keep step, to raise the hand to the first and second positions in loading, to prime and present at the word of command; those are things that a man can learn in a month or two, if he gives his attention to the work. I mean that I learned discipline, which is, that the corporal is always in the right when he speaks to the private soldier, the sergeant is right when he speaks to the corporal, the sergeant-major when speaking to the sergeant, the sub-lieutenant to the sergeant-major, and so on upwards to the marshal of France—even if he were to say that the moon shines in broad daylight, or that two and two make five.

That is not an easy thing to get into your head, but there is one thing which is a great help to you, and that is a great notice-board fixed up in the rooms, and which is read out from time to time, to settle your thoughts. This notice-board enumerates everything that a soldier is supposed to want to do—such as, for instance, to return to his native village, to refuse service, to contradict his superior officer, etc., and always ends by promising he shall be shot, or at least have five years' hard labour, with a cannon-ball fastened to his leg, if he does it.

The day after my arrival at Frankfort I wrote to M. Goulden, to Catherine, and to Aunt Grethel, and it may be imagined with what feelings. I felt as I talked to them as if I was still in their midst. I told them of my fatigues, of the kindness I had met with at Mayence, and the resolution it required not to stay behind. I also said I thanked God I was in good health, and felt much stronger than when I left, and that I embraced them a thousand times.

I wrote the letter in our room, surrounded by my comrades, and the Phalsbourg men made me send their remembrances to all their families. We enjoyed again a brief interval of pleasure. Then I wrote to Mayence, to the good people of the Capuzigner-strasse, who had, so to speak, saved me from utter despair. I told them that the roll-call had obliged me to leave in a hurry

very early; that I hoped to see them again, and to thank them; but that the battalion had been marched off at once for Frankfort, and therefore they must pardon me.

That same day, in the afternoon, we received our uniforms. Dozens of Jews came to the barracks, and the men sold them their civilians' clothing. I parted with everything but my stockings and shoes. The Italians had all the difficulty in the world to make themselves understood to these dealers, who wanted to take everything for nothing. But the Genoese were as keen as the Jews, and the bargaining went on till night. Our corporals got more than one glass on the occasion; for it was as well to make friends with them, as they drilled us morning and afternoon in the court yard. Christine, who kept the canteen, was always in her corner, with the little charcoal stove under her feet. She showed particular consideration for all young men of good family, as she called those who were not careful of their money. How many there were among us who let themselves be fleeced to their last sou, in order to be called "men of good family!" Afterwards they were looked upon as beggars; but what would you have? Vanity—vanity! it is the ruin of the human race, from conscripts to generals.

During this time, every day brought recruits from France, and carts full of wounded men from Poland. What a sight it was, in front of the Saint Esprit Hospital on the other side of the river! It was a long procession that seemed to have no end, Some of these unhappy wretches had their nose or ears frozen, others a leg or an arm; and they were put down in the snow, to prevent them from falling to pieces. Never had I seen men so miserably clad—some in women's petticoats with worn-out old fur-caps, or battered shakos, with Cossacks' tunics, and handkerchiefs and skirts twisted round their feet. They crawled down from the carts clinging to the sides, and looked at you like wild beasts, their eyes sunk in their heads, and the hair bristling all over their faces. The beggars who sleep at street-corners might have had pity on them. And yet they were to be envied: for they had escaped death, while thousands of their comrades had perished in the snow or on the battlefields.

Klipfel, Zebedee, Furst, and I went to visit these unhappy fellows. They told us all the story of the retreat from Moscow, and then I saw that that terrible twenty-ninth bulletin had told nothing but the truth.

These stories excited our anger against the Russians. Several of us said, "I hope the war will begin again soon: they shall

find their masters this time; it is not over yet." I myself was infected by their anger, and sometimes thought, "Joseph, are you losing your head now? These Russians were defending their country, their families, everything that men hold most sacred in this world. If they had not defended them, we should have been right if we had despised them."

An extraordinary thing happened just at this time. You must know that my bedfellow Zebedee was the son of the gravedigger of Phalsbourg, and among ourselves we used to call him "Gravedigger," and he did not mind it from us. But one evening, after exercise, when he was going across the court yard, a hussar called out to him, "Here, Gravedigger, come and help me to drag these trusses of straw." Zebedee turned round and answered, "My name is not Gravedigger, and you may carry your trusses of straw yourself. Do you think I am your beast of burden?" Then the other called out, louder than before, "Conscript, do you mean to come? If you don't, look out for yourself!" Zebedee, with his great hooked nose, his grey eyes, and thin lips, was not remarkable for good temper. He went up to the hussar and said, "What's that you say?" "I order you to take up these trusses of straw—and smartly too—do you hear me, conscript?"

He was an old soldier, with a moustache, and great red whiskers, that spread out like brushes, in the fashion of Chamboran. Zebedee caught hold of him by one of his whiskers, but the hussar gave him two loud boxes on the ear. A handful of whiskers, however, remained in Zebedee's hand; as this quarrel had attracted a number of people, the hussar held up his finger and said, "Conscript, you shall hear from me to-morrow morning."

"Very good," answered Zebedee, "we shall see. I shall have news for you too, old soldier."

He came and told me about this directly; and I, knowing that he had never wielded any weapon but a pickaxe, could not help trembling for him.

"Look here, Zebedee," said I, "the only thing to be done now, as you can't desert, is to offer an apology to the old fellow to-morrow, for all these veterans have some terrible tricks of fighting, which they brought back from Egypt, Spain, and elsewhere. Listen to me. If you like, I'll lend you a crown to pay for a bottle to treat him; that will pacify him."

But he frowned, and would not listen to me.

"Rather than make excuse," he said, "I will go and hang

myself at once; I don't care for all the hussars put together. If it comes to fighting blows, I've a good long arm, and there is a stroke to be got out of my sabre that will go into his bones as well as any blow of his will go into my flesh." He was still in a rage about the boxes on the ear he had received.

Directly afterwards the fencing master Chazy came up, with Corporal Fleury, and Furst, Klipfel, and Leger; they all said Zebedee was right, and the fencing-master said that blows could only be washed out with blood, and that to fight was an honour for new recruits.

Zebedee answered that the Phalsbourg men were never afraid of blood-letting, and that he was ready. Then the fencing-master went to the captain of the company. Florentin, one of the most magnificent men you can imagine, tall, thin, broad-shouldered, and straight-nosed; and he had received the emperor's decoration at the battle of Eylau. He said it was quite according to rule to fight for a box on the ear; and even added that it would be a fine example for the conscripts, and that Zebedee would be unworthy to remain in the 3rd battalion of the 6th if he did not fight.

All that night I could not close my eyes. I heard my comrade snorting, and I thought, "Poor Zebedee, you will not be able to snort like that to-morrow night!" I trembled at having such a man for my bedfellow. At last I had just dropped off to sleep, a little before the dawn, when all at once I felt horribly cold. I opened my eyes, and what did I see? There stood the old red hussar, who had pulled the coverlet off our bed, and cried out, "Come, get up, sluggard, and I will show you with what wood I warm myself."

Zebedee got up quickly, and said, "I was asleep, veteran, I was asleep."

The other man, when he heard himself called a veteran, would have fallen upon my comrade, tooth and nail; but two tall fellows, who came to be his seconds, stopped him; and, besides, all the Phalsbourg men were there. "Come on!" cried the hussar.

But Zebedee dressed without hurrying himself. In a minute or two he said, "Shall we get permission to leave our quarters, old man?"

"Behind the watch house there's room for you to stand up," answered one of the hussars.

It was a place overgrown with nettles, behind the chimney of the watch house. It was surrounded by a wall, and from our windows we could see it very well. It was just below in the direction of the river.

Zebedee put on his overcoat, and said, turning towards me, "Joseph, and you, Klipfel, I choose you for my seconds."

But I shook my head.

"Well, then, Furst," said he. And they all went downstairs together.

I thought it was all over with Zebedee, and I was very sorry for it, and thought, "Here are not only the Russians and Prussians exterminating us, but our own people must be helping them."

All the men belonging to the room were at the windows; I alone remained in the background, sitting on the foot of my bed. Five minutes afterwards the clashing of sabres below made me turn quite pale; every drop of blood in my veins seemed to freeze. But that did not last long; for all at once Klipfel cried out, "Hit!"

Then I don't know how I came to be at the window; but looking out over the others, I saw the hussar leaning against the wall, and Zebedee getting up with his sabre all red with blood; he had slipped on his knees during the battle; the sabre of the old soldier, who was thrusting at him, had passed over his shoulder, and Zebedee, without losing an instant, had passed his own sword through his adversary's body. If he had not had the good fortune to slip, the hussar would have pierced his heart.

That was what I saw down below, at a glance. The hussar was sinking down by the wall; his seconds were supporting him, and Zebedee, pale as death, was staring at his sabre, while Klipfel held out his overcoat to him.

Almost directly afterwards the morning drum beat, and we went down to answer to the roll-call. This happened on the 18th February. The same day we received orders to pack up, and we marched out of Frankfort to go to Seligenstadt, where we remained till the 8th March. By this time all the recruits knew how to handle their muskets, and could go through the platoon exercise. We went away from Seligenstadt on the 9th March for Schweinheim, and on the 24th March, 1813, the battalion joined the division at Aschaffenburg, where Marshal Ney reviewed us.

The name of the captain of my company was Florentin, the lieutenant was named Bretonville, the commandant of the battalion Gemeau, the captain-adjutant-major Vidal, the colonel of the regiment Zapfel, the brigade-general Ladoucette, and the general of division Souham; every soldier ought to know that much, if he does not wish to march like a blind man.

## CHAPTER XI

The snow began to melt on the 18th or 19th of March. I remember that during the great review at Aschaffenburg, on a vast plain whence can be seen the Maine winding away into the distance, the rain never ceased falling from six o'clock in the morning till three in the afternoon. To our left was a castle, from which the people looked down, through the large windows, very much at their ease, while the water ran down into our boots. On the right murmured the river, which we saw through a thin mist. To keep our minds employed, the command came every minute, " Carry arms! Shoulder arms! "

The marshal rode slowly forward, with his staff around him; Zebedee was consoled by the thought that we were going to see the " bravest of the brave." For my part, I thought if I could see him from the chimney corner I should like it better. At last he came in front of us. I think I see him now, with his great hat sodden by the rain, his blue coat covered with decorations and gold lace, and great boots. He was a fine-looking man, with light red hair, an upturned nose, and sparkling eyes, and with a very determined look altogether. He was not proud, for when he passed in front of our company, and the captain saluted with his sabre, all at once he turned round on his great horse and said, in a loud voice, " Why, it is Florentin! "

Then the captain sat upright, not knowing how to reply. It seems that the marshal and he had been private soldiers in the times of the republic. At last the captain answered, " Yes, marshal, it is Sebastian Florentin." " My word, Florentin," said the marshal, stretching out his hand in the direction of Russia, " I'm very glad to see you; I thought you were buried out yonder."

Our whole company was pleased, and Zebedee said to me, " That's something like a man; I would have my head broken for him."

I could not see why Zebedee should be content to have his head broken because the marshal had said good-day to his old comrade.

That's all I can remember about Aschaffenburg. In the evening we went back to eat our soup at Schweinheim, a place rich in wines, flax, and corn, where nearly every one looked at us with an unfriendly eye. We were lodged in the houses by threes and fours, and every day we had meat, either beef, bacon, or mutton. The bread was very good, and so was the wine. But several of our number took it into their heads to say everything was bad, thinking by this means to pass for great people. But they quite were mistaken, for I heard the citizens say to each other in German, "Those fellows are beggars in their own country. If you were to go into France, you would not find so much as a potato in their cellars."

And they were seldom mistaken: which made me think that those people who are so fastidious abroad are generally poor creatures at home.

For my part, I was very glad to be lodged in this way, and would have been content to continue so all through the campaign. Two conscripts from Saint Die were with me at the village postmaster's, almost all of whose horses had been requisitioned for our cavalry. That was not likely to put him in a very good humour, but he said nothing about it, and smoked his pipe behind the stove from morning till night. His wife was a big stout woman, and his daughters were very pretty. They were afraid of us, and used to run away when we came in from exercise or from mounting guard outside the village.

On the evening of the fourth day, when we had just finished supper, there came in an old man in a black greatcoat, with a white head and quite a venerable countenance. He saluted us, and then said in German to the postmaster, "These are new recruits?"

"Yes, M. Stenger," answered the other; "we shall never be rid of those people. If I could poison them all, I'd very soon do it."

I turned round quietly, and said to him, "I understand German. Don't talk in that way."

When the postmaster heard me say that his great pipe almost fell from his hand. "You are very imprudent in your talk," said M. Stenger, the old man. "If any one but this young man had heard you, consider what might happen."

"It's only my way of speaking," said the stout man. "What would you have? When people take everything from you, and you are plundered year after year, at last you don't know what to say, and you talk at random."

The old gentleman, who was, in fact, the clergyman of Schweinheim, then came up and saluted me, and said, "Sir, you have acted like an honest man. Believe me when I say that M. Kalkreuth is incapable of doing an injury, even to our enemies."

"I believe it, monsieur," I answered: "otherwise I should not eat his sausages with such good heart."

When the postmaster heard this, he burst out laughing like a child, with his hands on his great hips, and then he cried, "I should never have imagined that a Frenchman could make me laugh!"

My two comrades were on guard that night, so they went out and left me alone. The postmaster went out and brought a bottle of old wine. He sat down at the table, and offered to touch glasses with me, which I did willingly. And from that day till the time when we went away, these people put great confidence in me. Every evening we used to talk by the fireside; the clergyman used to come, and even the young girls came down to listen. They were fair-haired and had blue eyes; one of them was about eighteen, the other twenty. I thought I saw a likeness to Catherine in them, and that made my heart leap.

They knew that I had a sweetheart at home, for I could not help telling them so, and that softened them toward me.

The postmaster complained bitterly of the French; the clergyman said that they were a vain and frivolous nation, and that for this reason all Germany was going to rise up against us; that people were tired of the licence of our soldiers and the rapacity of our generals, and that the Tugendbund, or Union of Virtue, had been formed to fight us. "In past days," he said, "you used to talk of liberty and we liked to hear that, and rather wished success to your armies than those of the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Austria. You used to make war against our soldiers and not against us; you upheld ideas which everybody considered just and great, and that is why you had not the nations, but only their rulers, against you. But now it is a very different matter. All Germany is going to march, all our young men are rising, and it will be our turn to talk to France of liberty, virtue, and justice. The side that advocates these things is always the stronger, because its opponents are only the vagabonds of all nations, and on its side are youth and courage, and great ideas, and all that raises the soul above egotism, and makes men sacrifice their lives without regret.

You were in the position for a long time, but you got tired of it. I can remember the time when your generals were fighting for liberty, when they slept on straw, in barns, like common soldiers—terrible men they were! But now they have sofas, and they are prouder than our nobles, and richer than bankers, and therefore war, which was the finest thing in the old time—an art, a sacrifice, a devotion of oneself to one's country—has become a trade which pays better than keeping a shop. It is still very grand, because one wears epaulettes; but there is a difference between fighting for eternal truth and fighting to benefit one's shop.

"To-day it's our turn to talk of liberty and of the Fatherland; and that is why I think this war will be disastrous to you. Every thinking man, from the simple student to the professor of theology, will march out against you. You have at your head the greatest general in the world; but on our side is eternal justice. You think the Saxons, the Bavarians, the Badeners, and the Hessians are for you. Don't deceive yourselves; the sons of old Germany know that it is the greatest crime and the greatest shame to fight against their brothers. Kings may make alliances; but the nations will be against you in spite of those alliances, for they defend their own lives and their country—that which God has made us love, and what we cannot betray without committing a crime. All are ready to fall upon you. The Austrians will massacre you if they have a chance, in spite of the marriage of the emperor with Marie Louise. People begin to see that the interests of kings are not everything in this world, and the greatest genius cannot change the nature of things."

Thus the clergyman spoke in a grave tone. I did not understand his meaning very well then, and I thought: "Words are words, and musket-shots are musket-shots. If we find only students and professors of theology to fight against, all will be well. And for the rest, discipline will prevent the Bavarians and Hessians and Saxons from turning against us just as it obliges us Frenchmen to fight, though many of us would rather not. Does not the soldier obey the corporal, the corporal the sergeant, and so on to the marshal, who does what the king tells him? It is easy to see that this clergyman has never served in a regiment, otherwise he would know that such ideas count for nothing, and that the word of command is everything. But I won't contradict him, for if I do, the postmaster won't bring me any more bottles of wine after supper. Let them think what

they please; all that I wish is that we may meet nobody but theologians."

While we were thus talking, suddenly on the morning of the 27th of March the order came to march. The battalion halted that night at Lauterbach, and the next at Neukirchen, and then it was nothing but marching and marching. Those who did not get accustomed to carrying the knapsack could not say it was for the want of practice, for, thank Heaven! we got over the ground. As for me, I had left off perspiring, even with my fifty cartridges in my pouch, and my knapsack and gun, and I don't know if I even limped. We were not the only men on the move, for all were marching. Everywhere you met regiments on their way, detachments of cavalry, processions of cannon, convoys of powder and shot, and all were moving towards Erfurt, just as, after a great downpour of rain, thousands of rivulets run in every direction towards the river.

Our sergeants said to each other, "We're getting near—it's going to be warm work." And we thought, "So much the better; these rascally Russians and Prussians are the cause of our being taken from our homes; if they had kept quiet we should still be in France."

But this reflection made us feel very bitter.

But everywhere you find people who are always fond of fighting; Klipfel and Zebedee were always talking of falling on the Prussians; and as I did not like to appear less courageous than the rest, I also used to say that I should be glad to do the same.

On 8th April our battalion marched into the citadel of Erfurt, a very strong place. I shall always remember how, when we broke ranks in the square in front of the barracks, the baggage-master gave the sergeant of my company a packet of letters. Among the number there was one for me. I at once recognised Catherine's handwriting, and this had such an effect upon me that my knees trembled. Zebedee took my musket and said, "Come along!"

I had put my letter in the bottom of my pocket, and all the men from our district came after me to hear it read. But I wanted to sit quietly on my bed before I opened it; and not till we were quartered in a corner of the Finckmatt, and my gun was placed in the rack, did I begin it. All the others were leaning over my shoulders. The tears ran down my cheeks, because Catherine told me that she prayed for me.

And when my comrades heard that, they said they were sure

someone was praying for them also. One spoke of his mother, another of his sisters, and a third of his sweetheart. At the end M. Goulden wrote to say that every one in the town was well, and that I must take courage, for all these miseries would last only for a time. He especially charged me to tell my comrades that they were remembered, and that their parents and friends complained at having received no letters. Of course we all felt very happy, and when I think of 8th April, and of the fighting which was about to commence, I always look on it as a farewell to my country on the part of half my comrades, many of whom were never more to hear of friends and parents and of all they loved so well.

## CHAPTER XII

Sergeant Pinto remarked that this was only the opening of the ball, and that we should soon come to the dancing. Meanwhile we were stationed in the citadel, together with a regiment of the 27th of the line, and from the ramparts we could see that all the country was filled with soldiers. Some were bivouacking, while others were quartered in villages. On the 18th, after we had been on guard at the gate of Warthau, Sergeant Pinto, who seemed to be partial to me, remarked, "Well, Joseph, the emperor has arrived." Nobody had heard this as yet, so I answered, "With due respect, I have been drinking a glass of wine with Sapper Merlin, who was sentinel at the general's door last night, and he said nothing about it." He winked and replied, "Everything is in motion, and busy. You do not yet understand this, conscript. But the emperor has actually come. I can feel it down to the tips of my toes. When he is absent, things seems to move on one leg. Look yonder at the couriers riding along the roads. You see everything seems to be looking up. Now look out for the dancing; you will soon see. The Kaiserliks and Cossacks need no spectacles to see that the emperor is here; they know it at once." And so saying he chuckled behind his long moustache. I had a presentiment of coming trouble, but I was obliged to appear pleased.

The old sergeant was quite right, for the same day about three o'clock in the afternoon, all the soldiers encamped round the town were put in motion, and at five o'clock we were under arms. The prince marshal of the Moskwa entered the town amid a large staff, and immediately afterwards a grey old soldier, General Souham, came to the fort and reviewed us in the square.

In a powerful voice he said, "Soldiers, you are about to become part of the advance guard of the 3rd Corps. Try to remember that you are Frenchmen. Vive l'Empereur!" And we all replied with a shout, "Vive l'Empereur," the noise echoing throughout the great square. Then the general went away with Captain Zapfel.

That night we were relieved by some Hessian troops, so we marched out of Erfurt with the 10th Hussars and a troop of

Baden Cuirassiers. Early in the morning we saw Weimar, and in the rising sunlight we beheld the gardens, and an old castle on the right. Here we bivouacked, and the hussars acted as scouts. At nine o'clock, while making our soup, we heard, a long way off, the noise of musketry firing. The fact was, our hussars had met some Prussian hussars in the town, and were fighting and firing at each other. But it was so far off that we could really see nothing of the combat. After about an hour, the hussars returned. They had lost two men; and this was the beginning of the campaign.

We remained there for five days, during which time all the 3rd Corps advanced. As we were the advanced guard, we had to move forward again in the direction of Suza and Warthau. There first we came in sight of the enemy; they were Cossacks, who always kept out of gunshot, and the farther these people retreated, the stronger our courage became.

What annoyed me was to hear Zebedee say, in a discontented tone, "Will they never stop? Will they never stop?"

I thought, "If they go away what better thing can we desire? We shall have war without suffering any losses."

But at last they made a stand on the farther side of a rather broad and deep river, and we saw a number of them waiting to cut us down if we had the misfortune to cross over. It was the 29th of April, and was beginning to grow late; there could not have been a more beautiful sunset. On the other side of the water extended a plain as far as the eye could see, and against the red band of the sky a number of horsemen could be descried with shakos over their faces, green jackets, little cartridge-boxes under their arms, and sky-blue trousers; there were also behind them a number of lances. Sergeant Pinto knew these men for Russian mounted chasseurs and Cossacks. He also recognised the river, which he said was the Saale. We came as close as we could to the river to fire at the horsemen, who retired, and disappeared beneath the red sky. Then a bivouac was established near the river, and the sentinels were posted. We had left a large village on our left; a detachment proceeded thither to try and obtain some meat by paying for it, for since the arrival of the emperor we had orders to pay for everything.

In the night, while making our soup, other regiments of the division came up; they also established their bivouacs along the bank; and a magnificent sight it was to see the long line of flame dancing on the waters. Nobody felt inclined to sleep;

Zebedee, Klipfel, Furst, and I were in the same mess, and we looked at one another and said, " To-morrow it will be warm work if we want to cross the river! All our comrades at Phalsbourg, who go and drink their wine at the brewery of the Wild Man, little think that we are sitting here on the bank of this river laying up rheumatism for our old days, to say nothing of the shots and sabre-cuts that are coming upon us, sooner perhaps than we think for."

" Yes," said Zebedee, " if I have to pass my sword to the left hand, it won't be for want of returning the cuts made at me."

We had been talking together in this way for two or three hours. Leger had stretched himself on the ground in his great-coat, with his feet towards the flame, and was asleep, when the sentinel cried, " Who goes there? " about two hundred yards from us.

" France! "

" What regiment? "

" The 6th of the line."

It was Marshal Ney and General Bernier, with artillery officers and cannon. The marshal had answered, " The 6th of the line," because he knew beforehand where we were; we were pleased at that, and it made us proud. We saw him pass by on horseback, and in spite of the night we recognised him easily, for the sky was bright with stars, and the moon was rising, so that we could see almost as plainly as in broad daylight.

They stopped at a turn of the river, when six cannon were put into position, and immediately afterwards the engineers arrived, with a long file of waggons laden with beams, planks, and everything necessary for making bridges. Our hussars ran along the banks to collect boats, and our gunners stood by their pieces, to sweep away all who should attempt to hinder the operation. For a long time we watched the work going on, and every moment there was the challenge, " Qui vive? " from the sentries, for the regiments of the 3rd Corps were arriving

At last, at daybreak, I fell asleep, and Klipfel had to shake me to wake me up. The drums were beating in all directions, the bridges were finished, and we were to cross the Saale. A heavy dew was falling; everybody made haste to wipe his gun and to roll up his greatcoat and buckle it on his knapsack. We helped one another, and then got into rank. It might have been about four o'clock in the morning. Everything was grey with the fog that came up from the river. Already two battalions had passed over the bridges, the soldiers in files on each side, the

flags and the officers in the middle. There was a hoarse murmuring sound. The cannon and tumbrils crossed afterwards.

Captain Florentin had just been making us see to our priming, when General Souham, General Chemineau, Colonel Zapfel, and our own commandant came up. The battalion set forward. I kept looking, expecting to see the Russians coming up at full gallop, but I could not see anything of them. Every regiment as it reached the farther shore formed square, and stood to arms. By five o'clock the whole division had crossed. The sun drove away the mist, and we saw at about three-quarters of a league away, on our right, an old town with pointed roofs, and a steeple of a round shape, covered with slates and surmounted by a cross, and farther on, behind it, a castle. This was Weissenfels. Between us and the town extended a valley. Marshal Ney, who had just come up, wanted, before anything else, to know what this valley might conceal. Two companies of the 27th were sent out in skirmishing order, and the squares marched forward at the ordinary step, the officers, sappers, and drummers in the middle, the cannon between two squares, and the tumbrils behind the last row.

Everybody looked with suspicion at this valley, the more so as the evening before we had seen a mass of cavalry, who could not have retired beyond the great plain which lay stretched all before us. I never felt so mistrustful as at that moment; I expected something would happen. In spite of this, to see ourselves marching well in rank—our guns loaded, our flags in front, our general behind, full of confidence—to see ourselves marching thus, keeping step, and without hurry, gave us great courage. I said to myself, " Perhaps when they see us they will run away; that would be the best thing both for them and for us."

I was in the second rank, behind Zebedee, in front of the battalion, and you may imagine that I kept my eyes open. From time to time I looked aside at the square which was advancing on the same line with us; and I saw the marshal in the midst of it, with his staff. All had their heads raised, their big hats stuck on with the points crosswise, and were looking out afar to see what was going on.

Presently the skirmishers came near the ravine, which was bordered with thorns and quickset hedges. Some moments before I had perceived, further on, on the other side, something moving and shining like ears of wheat with the wind passing over them; the thought came into my head that the Russians,

with their lances and sabres, might well be there; but still I found it difficult to believe it. But just when our sharpshooters came near the bushes, and a fusilade began at several points, I saw clearly that these moving points were lances. Almost directly afterwards, there was a flash just opposite us and a report of cannon. These Russians had artillery; they had just fired at us, and when a strange noise made me turn my head, I saw that in the ranks, on the left, there was a gap.

At the same time, I heard Colonel Zapfel say quietly, "Close the ranks!"

And Captain Florentin repeated, "Close the ranks!"

Everything had happened so quickly that I had no time to think. But fifty paces further on there was another flash, and a similar noise in the ranks—like a great gust of wind passing by—and I saw another gap—on the right hand this time. And each time the Russians fired, the colonel said, "Close the ranks," and I understood that each shot made a gap. This reflection troubled me very much, but there was nothing for it but to march on. I did not dare to think of all this, so I turned my mind away from it; when presently General Chemineau, who had just come into our square, cried out in a terrible voice, "Halt!"

Then I looked and saw that the Russians were coming on in masses, "First rank, kneel, fix bayonets!" cried the general, "ready!"

As Zebedee had knelt down on one knee, I was, so to speak, in the front rank. I can fancy I still see the line formed by this mass of horses and the Russians bending forward on their backs; and hear the voice of the general behind us, calling calmly, as if we were at drill, "Attention! Wait for the word to fire! Present! Fire!"

We fired, all four squares together; and one would have thought that the sky was falling. Directly the smoke dispersed a little, we saw the Russians galloping away at the top of their speed; but our cannon thundered, and our cannon-balls flew faster than their horses.

"Charge!" shouted the general. "See, see, they are going away!" said I to myself. And on all sides arose the cry, "Vive l'Empereur!"

In my joy, I began to shout with the rest. This lasted for about a minute. The squares had resumed their march, and I already thought it was all over; but at about a couple of hundred yards from the ravine there was a great noise, and for the second

time the general called out, "Halt! Front rank kneel; fix bayonets!"

The Russians were pouring forth from the ravine, like the wind, to fall upon us. They came on all together; the earth shook under them. The word of command could no longer be heard; but the sense of the French soldiers told them that they must fire into this mass, and the firing was heard pattering like the beating of drums at reviews. Those who have not heard this can have no idea what it is like. Some of the Russians came quite up to us; we could see them rise up in their stirrups, and then we could see nothing more.

After a few minutes, during which we continued to load and shoot, General Chemineau stood up and cried, "Cease firing!" We scarcely ventured to obey—every one made haste to fire one shot more; but when the smoke dispersed we saw the mass of cavalry ascending the opposite side of the slope. The squares immediately deployed, to march on in column. The drums beat the charge, and our cannon thundered. "Forward; forward! Vive l'Empereur!" we cried.

We entered into the ravine, over heaps of horses and of Russians, who were still struggling on the ground, and emerged at a quick pace on the Weissenfels side. All these Cossacks and chasseurs, with their cartridge-boxes at their sides, and backs bent, were galloping away before us as fast as they could. The battle was won!

But as we came near the town their guns, that they had carried off with them, stopped behind a kind of orchard and fired at us, and smashed the axe of Sapper Merlin, and carried off his head. The corporal of sappers, Thome, had his arm shattered by a fragment of the axe, and it had to be cut off that evening at Weissenfels. Then we began to run forward, for the quicker we got there the less time would the others have to fire; every one understood that. We entered the town by three places, across gardens, hedges, and hop-grounds, clearing the walls as we came on. The marshal and the generals came running after us. Our regiment entered the town by an avenue bordered with poplars that skirted the cemetery; just as we debouched on the grand square another column came marching on through the chief street.

Then we halted, and the marshal, without losing a minute, detached the 27th Regiment to take a bridge, and try to cut off the enemy's retreat. During this time the rest of the division came up, and stood in order on the place. The burgomaster

and the councillors of Weissenfels were already at the door of the council-house to wish us good-day.

When we were all formed in line, the Marshal Prince of the Moskwa passed before our front of battle and said to us in a joyful tone, "Very good, very good indeed! I am pleased with you; the emperor shall know your good conduct; very good indeed!"

He could not help laughing, because we had run forward against the cannon. And when General Souham said to him, "It goes well," he answered, "Yes, yes! It's in the blood; it's in the blood."

For my part, I rejoiced at having escaped unhurt from this affair. The regiment remained here till the next day. We were lodged in the houses of the people, who were afraid of us, and gave us everything we asked for. The 27th came back in the evening, and was quartered in the old castle. We were very tired. After smoking two or three pipes together, and talking of the glory we had earned, Zebedee, Klipfel, and I went to sleep in a carpenter's shop, on a pile of shavings, and we stayed there till midnight, when the drums beat the recall. Then we were obliged to get up. The carpenter gave us some brandy, and we went out. The rain was falling in sheets. This very night the regiment had to go and bivouac at the village of Clepen, at two hours' distance from Weissenfels. We were anything but pleased at this on account of the rain.

Several other detachments joined us. The emperor had arrived at Weissenfels, and all the 3rd Corps was to follow us. We talked of nothing else all the day; many were glad of it. But the next morning at about five o'clock our battalions set out again; it was to form the advance guard. In front of us ran a river called the Rippach. Instead of turning aside to find a bridge, we had to cross it at once. The water came up to our waists, and I thought to myself as I tried to drag my boots out of the mud, "If any one had told you this while you were at M. Goulden's, and feared to get a cold in your head, and changed your socks twice a week, you would never have believed it." But there are terrible experiences in life!

As we marched down along the farther bank of the river, among the rushes, we discovered on the heights to the left a band of Cossacks reconnoitring us. They were following us slowly, without daring to attack us, and then I thought that even mud might be good for something. We had been marching

thus for about an hour, and it was broad daylight, when all at once a terrible fusilade and the roaring of cannon made us turn our heads in the direction of Clepen. The commandant on his horse was looking over the rushes.

This went on for a long time; at last Sergeant Pinto said, "The division is advancing; it is attacked."

The Cossacks looked out too, and did not disappear till they had reconnoitred us for an hour. Then we saw the division advancing in column on the right, in the plain, driving masses of cavalry before it. "Forward!" cried the commander, and we ran on without knowing why, continuing to descend the river, till we reached an old bridge, at the junction of Rippach and the Gruna. We were to stop the enemy at this point; but the Cossacks had already found out our stratagem; all their army retired behind the Gruna, which they passed at a ford; and when the division joined us we heard that Marshal Bessieres had just been killed by a cannon-ball.

We left the bridge to go and bivouac before the village of Gorschen. The report was that a great battle was to be fought, and that what had occurred till now was only a beginning, to try if the recruits would stand fire well. Accordingly everybody may imagine the kind of thoughts a sensible man would have who was put there against his will, amongst such thoughtless persons as Furst, Zebedee, and Klipfel, who were quite rejoiced at it; just as if such an event could bring them anything but bullet-wounds, sabre-cuts, and bayonet-thrusts. All the rest of that day, and even during part of the night, thinking of Catherine, I prayed to God to preserve my life, and that I might keep the use of my hands, which are necessary to all poor men who have to earn their bread.

## CHAPTER XIII

We lighted our fires upon the hill before Gross Gorschen. A party went down into the village in order to bring up some cattle with which to make soup, but we were so very tired that most of us preferred sleeping to eating. Other regiments continued to arrive with guns and ammunition, so that about eleven o'clock there must have been eleven or twelve thousand men present, in addition to two thousand more in the village, this being the whole of General Souham's division. This general and his staff took up their quarters in a mill near our left, and a rivulet ran by called the Fluss Graben. Sentinels were placed on the hill within gun-shot. Overcome with weariness, I fell asleep, but woke up every hour. Behind us, near the old road which comes up from the old bridge at Poserna, and goes to Lutzen and Leipsic, we could hear a great noise all through the night, the rumbling of waggons and guns falling and rising in the midst of the silence. Sergeant Pinto did not sleep, but dried his shoes at the fire, as he smoked, and every time any one moved, he wished to talk, and said, "Well, conscript," but all of us pretended not to hear him, and yawned and went to sleep again. The clock of the village struck six as I woke up. I felt as though the bones in my legs and side had been broken. This was through having walked in the mud; nevertheless, by resting my hands on the ground I was able to sit up and warm myself, for I was very cold. The fires were smouldering, nothing was left of them but ashes and a few hot cinders. The sergeant stood up and looked over the snowy plain, on which the sun was throwing great golden lines. They were all asleep around us, some on their backs, some leaning on their elbows, some snoring, and others talking in their sleep. The sergeant saw that I was awake, and took up a cinder to light his pipe with, saying, as he did so, "Well, conscript, we are in the rear-guard, now." I could not understand what he meant, so he said, "You seem surprised, conscript, but it is all very plain, we have not moved, but the army has described a semi-circle. Yesterday it was before us on the River Rippach, now it is behind us at Lutzen, so that instead of being at the head, we are now at the tail." And he winked in a very knowing way, and began to puff away at his

pipe. I asked if we should gain anything by this movement, and he replied that we should be the first to arrive at Leipsic and fall upon the Prussians as we should soon understand. I sat up and gazed at the country. In front was a swampy plain, across which ran the little River Gruna, as well as the Fluss Graben, and some round hills rose up by the water-side. Farther on, a large river flowed, which Pinto told me was the River Elster. Over all the scene the mists of morning were rising. Turning round I saw behind us, in the hollow, the church tower of Gross Gorschen and beyond, on the other side, several little villages built in the valleys, for that is a hilly country. There were the villages of Kaya, Eisdorf, Rahna, Klein Gorschen, and Gross Gorschen. All this I learnt afterwards. Among the hills there were little lakes, and poplar and willow and other trees were growing. The village, where we bivouacked, was the most advanced of all in the direction of the Elster, the farthest away was Kaya, behind which was the great road from Lutzen to Leipsic. There were no fires on the hills save those of our division, but all the 3rd Corps occupied the village, with head-quarters at Kaya.

At seven o'clock we heard the morning drum, and the trumpets of the artillery and cavalry sounded the réveillé. Some went down to the village in search of food, and others to find hay and straw. Ammunition waggons came up, and bread and cartridges were given to all of us. We were told to stay where we were while the army marched to Leipsic, and that is why Sergeant Pinto said we were the rear. Some old women, who sold us things, came from the village, and as I still had plenty of money left, I gave Klipfel and Zebedee a glass of wine each to protect them from the fogs around. I also offered a glass of brandy to Sergeant Pinto, who had said that brandy and bread warmed the heart of man.

We were quite happy, and no one knew what dreadful things were about to happen that day. Nobody thought that the Russians and Prussians were waiting for us beyond the river. But, unfortunately, they knew where we were, and about ten o'clock the general with all his officers rode along the hill at top speed, as though they had just heard some news. I was standing sentry by the piled arms, and I fancy I see him now with his grey head, and large hat trimmed with white, ride up, take out a telescope, and look through it, and then quickly ride back, and give the order to beat the retreat. Of course, all the sentinels fell back, and Zebedee, who had eyes like a hawk's, said, "I can

see over there, near the River Elster, men moving to and fro; they are advancing in good order, and some are coming out on the marshes from bridges. What a down-pour it will be, if they all come and fall upon us!" Sergeant Pinto stood with his nose in the air, holding his hands over his eyes, and said, "If I know anything about it, this is the beginning of a battle. Our army is marching on Leipsic, and extends for three or four leagues, and these rascally Prussians and Russians hope to fall upon us with all their force and cut us in two; it really is a very good move. They are learning the tricks of war every day." Klipfel asked what we were going to do. The sergeant replied, "That is simple enough. There are ten or twelve thousand of us here, with old Souham, who has never retreated an inch; it is our duty to hold as fast as iron; one man against six or seven, until the emperor hears of it, and sends help to us. See, there are the staff officers already riding away." And it was true, for several officers were galloping over the plain of Lutzen, and towards Leipsic. They seemed to go like the wind, and in my mind I prayed to heaven that they would arrive in time to send all the army to our assistance. To be told that one must die is terrible, and I would not wish my greatest foe to be placed in such a position. Then Sergeant Pinto said, "Conscripts, you are in great luck. If any of you happen to live through it, you will be able to boast of having seen something worth looking at. Look at those blue lines there, with their muskets, along the Fluss Graben; each line is a regiment, and as there are thirty lines, that means 60,000 Prussians, to say nothing of the cavalry, who are numerous. To our left near the Rippach, others were advancing, and flashing in the sun; these are the cuirassiers of the Imperial Russian Guard. How well I remember the day at Austerlitz, when we cut them up beautifully! There must have been eighteen or twenty thousand of them. And do you see those masses behind the lances? Those are bands of Cossacks. So, conscripts, in an hour's time we shall have the pleasure of looking into the eyes of 100,000 men, the most determined Russians and Prussians. It is a battle which may win one a medal, but one must not count too much on one's luck." Zebedee, who had no very clear ideas in his head, and who thought he was sure of a cross or medal already, asked the sergeant if he really meant this. He was a foolish young man, who looked upon everything as being to his advantage.

"Well," said the sergeant, "we shall fight at close quarters; if you see a colonel, or a gun, or a banner, or anything that strikes

your eye, rush upon it; never mind the cuts you get from sword or bayonet or anything else, but seize it, and if you get it, perhaps your name may be sent in," and I remembered as he spoke that the Mayor of Felsenbourg had received a medal for bringing out the whole village in carts, wreathed in garlands, to meet Marie Louise, singing old German songs the while, and I thought that this way of gaining a medal was much more comfortable than Sergeant Pinto's.

But I really had not much time to think about it. Drums were being beaten on every side, and everybody was running to get his weapons, and to seize his musket. The officers ranged us in battle array, the guns galloped from the village, and were put into position on the hill, a little behind the ridge on the top, with the waggons behind them. And farther on in the village around, all was in motion, though we were the first on whom the shock had to fall. The enemy had stopped about two gunshots away, and his cavalry were rushing about by hundreds to reconnoitre us. Seeing all these Prussians on both sides of the river, blocking up its banks with their front lines, formed in columns, made me say to myself, "Now, Joseph, all is over, all is lost; there is no help for you. The best thing you can do is to take your revenge, and defend yourself, and have no mercy upon anybody, only defend yourself." I was thinking thus when General Chemineau rode past alone in front of the battle line, and told us to form squares. All the officers on either side repeated the order, and four squares were formed, with four battalions in each. I was in one of the inside ranks, for which I was thankful, for I naturally thought that the Prussians, who were coming in three columns, would first of all fall on those outside. Hardly had I thought this, when quite a shower of bullets burst through the square, and then the guns, which the Prussians had planted on the hill to our left, began to roar very much louder than at Weissenfels; there seemed to be no end to it. They had thirty guns on the ridge, and one can imagine what a noise they made. The cannon balls now whistled in the air, now through the ranks, and then they plunged into the earth, which they threw up with a terrible thud. Our guns answered in a way that deafened the sound of the others, but that afforded us no comfort, and what made us feel worse was the officers continually shouting, "Close up the ranks, close up the ranks." A tremendous cloud of smoke surrounded us, and I said to myself, "If we remain here a quarter of an hour longer, we shall be killed without a chance of defending ourselves." It seemed

very hard that it should be so. Then suddenly the front columns of the Prussians appeared between the hills, advancing with a strange noise like the rushing of many waters. Whereupon three sides of our square opened, and began to fire upon them. God knows how many Prussians remained in the hollow, but instead of stopping, their comrades followed on, crying, "The Fatherland, the Fatherland." They fired on us point blank, not more than one hundred yards off, and then they attacked with their bayonets, and tried to break our squares. Really, they seemed to fight like madmen. Never in my life shall I forget how the battalions of those Prussians came close up to us, and dealt us thrusts with their bayonets, which we returned, without quitting the ranks, and how they were swept off by two guns which had been put about fifty yards behind the square. After that, no others came between the squares. Down the hill they went again, and we loaded our guns to kill them to the last man, when suddenly we heard their firing renewed with a great noise on our right. It was their cavalry coming up to take advantage of the gaps their guns had made. I saw nothing of this for it was on the other side of the plain, but meanwhile the balls were carrying us off by the dozen. General Chemineau had his leg broken. Things could not proceed much longer in this way, so we had the order to retreat, and you may well imagine how glad we were to obey the order. We went right round the village of Gross Gorschen, the Prussians following us, and we fired at each other. The two thousand men who were in the village pelted the enemy with a long fire through the windows, while we went along the hill to the second village; but here we found that the Prussian cavalry had appeared on our flank, and had cut off our retreat, so we were compelled to remain under the fire of their guns. This made us very angry, and Zebedee said, "Let us charge them at once, rather than stay here to be shot at." Of course the danger was terrible, for all this regiment of cavalry were beginning to prepare to charge us. We were still retreating, when we heard the cry, "Halt" from the top of the hill, and immediately after, the Hussars, who were rushing upon us, received a fearful discharge of grape shot that knocked them over by hundreds. We then found that the Girard Division had come from Klein Gorschen to our support, and they had placed sixteen guns in position on our right. This had an excellent effect, and the Prussians scampered off more quickly than they came. The 6th Regiment of the Girard Division

joined ours, to stop the Prussian infantry, who were still advancing in three lines with three more columns behind them. We had lost Gross Gorschen, but the battle was to become more fierce between Klein Gorschen and Rahna; for myself, I thought of nothing but vengeance. I had become almost wild with indignation and wrath against those who would take my life, which is the property of all men, and the duty of every man to defend as long as he can. I felt bitter hatred against the Prussians, and their insolent cries and shouts aroused my very heart within me. I was glad to see Zebedee was not wounded, as we stood there awaiting a fresh attack, and we shook hands. He said to me, "We have been lucky, but I hope the emperor will soon come, for the enemy is twenty times stronger than we are. I hope we shall get some more guns." I observed that he no longer spoke of earning medals. Then I looked around to see if Sergeant Pinto was there, and I saw him behind me, quietly wiping his bayonet. I was glad to see that his face had not changed, and it would have pleased me to know whether Klipfel and Furst were still in the ranks, but suddenly the order came to shoulder arms, and I had something else to think of.

The first three regiments of the enemy waited on the hill near Gross Gorschen for the second three, whom we saw going up, shouldering their muskets. The village was all on fire, the thatched houses were blazing, and the smoke rose high in the sky. On a bridge to our left, we saw the enemy bringing across the ploughed fields several guns to take us on the flank. It was about twelve o'clock when the six columns began to move, and large masses of cavalry were employed on both sides of Gross Gorschen. Our guns, which were behind the squares, along the hills, opened a terrible fire against the Prussians, who replied all along the line. Our drums began beating, warning us of the approach of the enemy, and we could hear a strange humming noise, as of bees, or a coming storm, and below us in the valley the Prussians were crying out: "The Fatherland, the Fatherland." As they climbed the hill, the firing from their regiments covered us with smoke, because the wind blew towards us, which prevented us from seeing them properly, but still we continued to fire. For some time we could not see the enemy, but suddenly the Prussian Hussars appeared in our square. I cannot tell how it happened, but they were there, bending right and left from their little horses to sabre us without mercy. We thrust our bayonets at them, shouting; they gave us pistol shots

—it was a terrible time. Pinto, Zebedee, and a score of others in our company kept together. Never shall I forget those pale faces and long moustaches passing behind the ears, and little shakos strapped under the chin; horses were neighing and galloping over heaps of dead and wounded. I have even now in my ears the cries we uttered, sometimes in German, sometimes in French. The Prussians called us pig-skins, and Sergeant Pinto kept on saying, "Steady, my boys, steady." I have never been able to understand how we got clear of it all. We marched at random, in the smoke, and ran about among the bullets and sword-thrusts. All I remember is that Zebedee kept calling out to me, "Come on, come on." Finally we were in a sloping field, behind a solid square, with Sergeant Pinto and seven or eight others of our company; we all looked like butchers. The sergeant told us to load our guns, and as I reloaded I saw that there was blood and hair on the point of my bayonet, which told me that in my anger I had delivered some terrible blows. After a few minutes Pinto said, "The regiment is routed; those rascally Prussians have sabred half of it. We shall find it later, but at present we must stop the enemy from gaining the village. Left file, forward march." Going down a little flight of steps, which led to a garden in the village of Klein Gorschen, we entered a house, one door of which led into the fields; this the sergeant barricaded with a table, and then, pointing to the street door, he said, "That is our retreat." Then we went up to the first floor, to a good-sized room, which formed the corner of the house. It had two windows looking on to the village, and two others looking towards the hill, which was covered with smoke, where the firing of guns and muskets was still proceeding. At the back was a bed, and near the bed a cradle. No doubt the people had run away at the beginning of the battle, but a dog with a curly tail and pointed ears and nose stared at us, with gleaming eyes, from beneath the curtains. I see all these things as in a dream.

Then the sergeant opened a window, and began to fire down into the street where some Prussians were coming on with some waggons and carts. Zebedee and the others behind me were looking to see if their muskets were ready. I looked towards the ridge to see if the square was still unbroken. There it was, five or six hundred yards off, returning in good order, firing from its four sides on the horsemen all around it. Through the smoke I saw the colonel, a short, fat man on horseback, his

sword in his hand, and by his side the flag, so torn that it was nothing but a rag nailed to a stick.

Upon the left, rather farther away, a column of the enemy's troops was coming round the road, and marching on Klein Gorschen, for the purpose of intercepting our line of retreat to the village. Hundreds of stragglers like ourselves had come, and more were coming from every side; some of them turned round every few yards to fire their muskets, others were wounded and dragged themselves along to find a place of safety. They came into the houses, and as the column advanced, a continuous fire was opened upon it from all windows; this stopped it, and more effectively, because at about the same time the divisions of Brenier and Marchand, sent to our relief, began to open fire. We were afterwards told that Marshal Ney had followed the emperor towards Leipsic, and that he had returned on hearing the firing.

However, the Prussians halted at this place, and then the firing ceased on both sides. Our squares and columns marched along the ridges opposite to Starsiedel, and everybody in the village did his best to get back to his regiment. Ours had got mixed up with others, and when the division halted in front of Kaya, we hardly knew one another. Our roll-call was first called and there were forty-two men left in the company. Furst and Lager were not there, but Zebedee, Klipfel, and myself had escaped with whole skins. Unhappily, this was not the end, for the Prussians, full of arrogance at our retreat, began to prepare to attack us at Kaya. Large reinforcements had joined them, and seeing this, I thought that the emperor, although he was such a great general, had done a very stupid thing in extending his line towards Leipsic, thus leaving us to be surprised by an army of more than 100,000 men. Just as we were reforming behind Brenier's division, 18,000 veterans of the Prussian Guard ran up the ridge, carrying the hats of our dead soldiers on their bayonets, in token of their victory. At the same time the battle continued on the left between Starsiedel and Klein Gorschen. The large masses of Russian cavalry which we had seen that morning flashing in the sun behind the brooklet Gruna wanted to turn our flank, but the 6th Corps had come up to our assistance, and the regiments of marines were there as steady as walls. All the plain was covered with a mist, through which helmets and lances and swords were shining by thousands. As for us, we were still falling back when all at once something rushed past us with a sound of thunder. It was Marshal Ney,

who had galloped up with all his staff. Such a face I had never seen; his eyes flashed, his cheeks trembled with anger, and in a moment he had galloped along the whole line, and was in front of our columns. Some miraculous power seemed to urge us to follow him, and instead of retreating we re-charged on the Prussians, and ten minutes later everything seemed to be wrapped in a sheet of flame. But the enemy held his ground bravely; he thought he was victorious, and would not yield his advantage, especially as he was receiving reinforcements and we were exhausted by a five hours' battle.

Our battalion was now in the second line, and the cannon balls flew over our heads, but a far worse noise was the rattle of the grape shot, a terrible kind of music, that shook my nerves, and could be heard a long way off. Amid the shouts, the words of command, and the shooting, we went down the ridge again, among heaps of dead. Our first division re-entered Klein Gorschen. There men were fighting breast to breast, nothing was seen in the village street but guns swung in the air, and generals on horseback with sword in hand, like any soldier. This lasted for several minutes and we said to one another, " It is going well, at last we are advancing."

But new troops had come up to help the Prussians, and we were obliged to fall back a second time, and so fast, that several fled as far as Kaya. This village was on the hill and was the last in front of the road to Lutzen. It was little more than a long row of houses, and between each was a garden with stable and sheds. If the enemy forced our position there, our army would be cut in two. I then remembered the words of Father Goulden, " If by any chance the enemy defeat us, they will take revenge on us for all we have done to them during the past ten years." I thought the battle was lost, for Marshal Ney himself, in the middle of a square, was losing ground, and the soldiers, anxious to get out of the scuffle, were carrying out the wounded officers on crossed muskets; things looked very bad indeed. I entered Kaya on the right of the village; scrambling over hedges and jumping over the little fences that separate the people's gardens from each other. Just as I was turning a corner by a door, I raised my head, and saw some fifty officers on horseback halt on the top of the hill opposite. Behind them artillery were going at full speed on the road to Leipsic. I looked very closely, and at last I recognised the emperor, a little way in front of all the rest. He was sitting back as if in an armchair, on his white horse. I could see him plainly enough under the pale

sky. He never moved, but watched the battle going on beneath through his telescope. Seeing him made me feel so glad that I began to shout, "Vive l'Empereur!" with all my might, and then I ran into the main street of Kaya, by a lane between two old houses. I was one of the first, and could see some of the people of the village, men and women and children, rushing to get into their cellars.

Some people, to whom I have told all this, blame me for running so fast, but I reply that when Marshal Ney himself retreated, Joseph Bertha could very well retreat also. Klipfel, Zebedee, Sergeant Pinto, and all the others whom I knew in my company, were still outside, and I heard such a terrible noise that no one could imagine what it was. Great masses of smoke rolled over the roofs, the tiles crashed and fell into the street, the walls fell down and drove in the beams with a terrible sound. On all sides, at this time, through the lanes, over hedges, and fences of the gardens, our men poured in, turning now and again to fire. There were some from every regiment, without hats, torn, blood-stained, and angry; and when I think of it, after all these years, I remember that most of these conscripts were almost children. Hardly one out of every twenty had a moustache; but bravery belongs to the French nation.

The Prussians, led by veteran officers, kept crying, "Forward, forward," and climbing up each other's backs, as it were, like hungry wolves, to get on faster, while we, twenty or thirty in number, in a corner of a barn with a garden in front, where there was a summer house, and some little cherry trees in blossom, which I think I can see now, opened a murderous fire on these rascals, who wanted to get over the wall beyond to take the village. How many of them fell back in the attempt, and tumbled into the mass of men below, I do not know, but fresh troops kept coming on. Hundreds of bullets whistled round our ears, and flattened themselves against the stones. Plaster was falling, and the door was full of holes; and we ran backwards and forwards, to load our muskets behind the barn and return to fire on them. We only took a little time to aim and to fire, but, notwithstanding, five or six of us had fallen with our faces to the ground; but of all this we took no heed. I went back for the tenth time, but just as I lifted my musket to the shoulder, it fell; I tried to pick it up, but fell over it, for a ball had struck me in the left shoulder, and blood was running over my breast like hot water. I tried to stand up, but could only sit leaning against the wall, the blood running all over me, and

then I made up my mind that I should die in that place. The thought turned me cold. My comrades continued to shoot over my head, and the Prussians replied. I knew another bullet would finish me, and this made me cling so tightly to the wall that I fell into a small ditch, along which the water ran from the street into the garden. My left arm was heavy as lead, and my head seemed to turn round and round; I could hear the firing, but it was as in a dream. All this must have lasted some time.

When at last I opened my eyes, night was falling, and the Prussians were running through the lane. The village was full of them, and in the garden I saw an old general with bare head and grey hairs sitting on a large brown horse. In a voice like a trumpet he called out for some guns, and the officers rode at full speed to obey his orders. Near him, on a wall, heaped with dead, was a doctor bandaging his arm. Behind, on the other side, was a thin young Russian officer in a hat with drooping plume of green feathers; I took all this in at a glance; the old man with his great nose, his broad flat forehead, and his bright eyes and his noble aspect, the others round him, the doctor, a little bald man in spectacles, and below, in the valley, five or six hundred yards off, amongst the houses, our soldiers rallying. It all comes back to me now, as if I were still there. There was no more shouting, but between Klein Gorschen and Kaya shrieks and groans arose, and a heavy rolling was heard, mingling with oaths and a crack of whips. I do not know why, but I dragged myself out of the ditch, and leaned against the wall again. I had barely done this when two guns, dragged by six horses each, came round the corner of the first house in the village. The men were beating their horses with all their might, and the wheels ploughed their way amid the dead and dying, as if they were so much straw, I could hear their bones cracking. That was the reason of the cries I heard, and it made my hair stand on end. The old general called out in German, "Here, point the guns yonder between those houses near the fountain." The two guns were at once turned round. The waggons with grape shot galloped up, and the general looked on with his left arm in a sling, and as he went up the lane I heard him say to the young Russian officer in a brusque voice, "Tell the Emperor Alexander that I am in Kaya; the battle will be won if he sends me support. Let there be no hesitation, but action; we are expecting a warm fight. Napoleon is near—I can feel that—in another half hour he will be upon us with his guard. At whatever cost, I will make a stand against him, but for God's sake lose not a moment

if the victory is to be ours." The young officer galloped off towards Klein Gorschen. At the same moment some one said to me, "Yonder old man is Blucher, the rascal. If I only had my musket!" I looked round and saw an old sergeant, thin and haggard, with long furrows in his face. He sat by the barn door, but his hands rested on the ground, for his ribs had been broken by a cannon ball. His bleared eyes followed the Prussian general with a squint, and his long hooked nose bent down towards his moustache. He had a fierce and proud look. Again he said, "If I only had my musket, you would see whether the battle was won." We two were the only two living beings among the dead blocking up this corner, and I was thinking perhaps to-morrow I should be buried with the rest in the garden opposite, and that I should never see my Catherine again. The tears were in my eyes, and I could not help saying, "It is all over now." Then the sergeant looked at me and saw that I was young. He said, "What is your wound, conscript?" "A musket ball in the shoulder," I replied. "In the shoulder," he said, "that is better than in the ribs, for one can get over that." And then, looking at me in a more gentle way, he said, "Fear nothing, you will see your country again all right." I thought he felt pity for my youth, and wanted to console me, but my chest felt broken to pieces, and there was no hope left in me. The sergeant said nothing more, though at intervals he tried to raise his head to see if our men were coming. He growled between his teeth, and at last lay down on his shoulder in the corner of the barn, whispering, "My account is settled, but I paid that big rascal for it, and no mistake." He glanced at the hedge opposite, and there I saw a Prussian soldier stretched on his back quite dead. It was about six o'clock. The enemy occupied the houses, gardens, main streets, the orchard and lanes. I was very cold, and had fallen into a kind of stupor, with my head on my knees, when the thunder of cannon aroused me. The two guns in the garden, and many others behind them higher up were firing, and their light illuminated the broad street through which the Prussians and Russians were moving onwards; from all the windows there was firing too. All this was nothing to the firing of the French on the opposite hill. In the valley, the Young Guard were advancing in double quick time, with the colonels, captains and generals on horseback in the midst of the bayonets, with uplifted swords, all looking misty and grey, though lighted up from time to time by the firing from the eighty guns which the emperor had placed

in line to support the movement. Those guns made a terrible noise, and though the distance was great, the very wall against which I leant shook to its foundation. In the street the cannon balls carried off files of Prussians and Russians, just as the scythe mows down the grass. I also heard the enemy's guns replying, and I thought, " God grant that our troops may conquer all, and then their poor wounded men will be taken care of. Whereas those Prussians and Russians will think of their own people first, and leave us all to die." I thought no more about the sergeant, for I was watching the Prussians loading their guns and aiming and firing, and in my soul I cursed them. And then I listened to the cries of " Vive l'Empereur! " which began to rise up from the valley and could be heard in the intervals between the roaring of cannon.

At the end of about twenty minutes the enemy began to fall back. They passed in crowds through the lane in which we were, to gain the ridge, and nearer and nearer came the cries of " Vive l'Empereur! " The artillery in front of us were firing for their lives, when three or four balls came amongst them, breaking the wheels, and covering them with dirt. One of the guns fell on its side, two men were killed and two wounded. Then I felt a hand seize me by the arm, and turning round I saw the old sergeant looking at me, although half dead, laughing in a fierce kind of way. The roof of our barn was falling in, and the walls were tottering, but we cared little for that; we saw nothing but the defeat of our enemies, and amid the dreadful din we only heard the cries of our own troops as they came nearer. All at once the sergeant, who was very pale, cried out, " There he is," and leaning forward on his knees, with one hand on the ground and the other lifted in the air, he shouted in a husky voice, " Vive l'Empereur! " With this he fell with his face to the ground, and never moved again. I bent forward to look, and saw Napoleon in the midst of the firing; his hat was pressed down upon his big head, his grey overcoat was open, a red ribbon crossed his white waistcoat, calm and composed, and as if lighted up by the gleam of bayonets. Everything gave way before him. The Prussian artillerymen ran from their guns, and jumped over the wall of the garden, despite the shouts of their officers, who tried to hold them back.

All these things I saw; they have remained as if burnt with fire into my brain; but from that moment I recollect nothing more of the battle, for in the hope of our victory I lost consciousness, and lay like a dead man in the midst of the corpses.

## CHAPTER XIV

I AWOKE in the night in the midst of silence. Clouds were flitting over the sky, and the moon looked down on the abandoned village, the overturned guns, and the heaps of dead, as she looked down from the beginning of the world on the water that flows, the grass that grows, and the leaves that fall in the autumn. Men are as nothing in comparison with eternal things, and those who are near death understand this better than all the rest.

I could not move now, and I suffered much. My right arm was all I could move, but I managed to raise myself on my elbow, and saw the dead heaped up to the end of the lane. The moon shone down upon them; they were as white as snow. Some had their eyes and mouth wide open, and others lay with their face to the ground, their knapsacks and cartridge-boxes on their backs, and their hands still grasping the musket. I saw all that, and it looked terrible; my teeth chattered with horror. I wanted to cry for help, but my voice sounded like the feeble cry of a sobbing child. I felt exhausted and despairing, but the feeble cry I uttered was echoed by others near me, whom it roused from their stupor, and was repeated on every side. All the wounded thought they heard help coming, and those who had strength left to complain lifted up their voices. These cries lasted for a few moments, and then all was silent, and I heard nothing but a horse breathing slowly beside me, on the other side of the hedge. The horse wanted to get up; I saw it lift its head and its long neck, and then it fell again.

The effort I had made had caused my wound to reopen, and I felt the blood running down again under my arm. Then I shut my eyes, and resigned myself to die; and all the distant things, from the time of my childhood, things that happened in the village, when my poor mother used to hold me in her arms and sing me to sleep—the little room and the old alcove, our dog Pommer, who used to play with me and roll me over on the ground; my father coming home in the evening, so cheerful, with his axe on his shoulder, and taking me up in his large hands to kiss me—all these things came back to me as in a dream. I thought, "Ah, poor mother! poor father! If you had known

that you were bringing up your child with so much love and care that he might one day perish miserably, alone, and far from all help, how you would have mourned! and how you would have cursed those who reduced him to such a state! Oh, if you were only here! If I could only ask your pardon for the trouble I have caused you!"

And as I thought of this the tears ran down my face, my chest heaved, and for a long time I remained sobbing to myself. And then there came to me the thought of Catherine, and Aunt Grethel, and kind Father Goulden, and what a terrible thing that was! It was like a vision passing before one's eyes. I saw their wonder and their fear when they heard of the great battle; Aunt Grethel running every day to the post, while Catherine waited for her and prayed, and M. Goulden, alone in his room, reading in the *Gazette* that the 3rd Corps had lost more men than all the others; how he walked to and fro with his head bowed down, and sat down very late at his bench. My heart was far away with them; it was waiting, so to speak, with Aunt Grethel before the post-office; it returned exhausted to the village; it saw Catherine in her desolation.

Then, one morning, the letter-carrier Roedig would come through Quatre Vents, with his blouse and his little leather bag; he would open the door of the sitting-room, and hand a large paper to Aunt Grethel, who would sit stupefied while Catherine stood beside her as pale as death, and it was the certificate of my death that had just arrived! I could hear the terrible sobs of Catherine as she lay stretched on the ground, and the groans of Aunt Grethel, as she cried out, with her grey hair dishevelled, that there was no justice on earth, that it would be better for honest folks never to have been born, for that God was abandoning them! Then good Father Goulden would come to console them; but when he came in he would begin sobbing with the rest, and all would weep together in grief and desolation, crying, "Oh, poor Joseph! poor Joseph!"

The thought of all this tore my heart. The idea also came into my head that thirty or forty thousand families in France, and Russia, and Germany would receive the same news; and that it would be more terrible still, since a great number of those who lay stretched dead on that battlefield had a father and a mother. This thing seemed to me like an abomination, and I could fancy a great cry from all the human race mounting upwards to the sky.

It was then I remembered those poor women at Phalsbourg,

whom I had seen praying in the church at the time of the retreat from Russia, and I understood what the feelings of their souls must have been. I thought that Catherine would be going there soon; how she would pray for years and years, thinking of me. Yes, I thought of that, for I knew that we had loved each other from our childhood, and that she would never forget me. My emotion was so great that one tear after another coursed down my cheeks; and yet it did me good to feel that confidence in her, and to be sure that she would always have me before her eyes, and would never take any one else for her husband.

In the morning the dew had begun to fall in great drops. The monotonous dropping on the roofs and in the garden and the lane took the place of the silence. I thought of God, who from the beginning of time has been doing the same things, and whose power is boundless; who pardons sins because He is good; and I hoped that He would pardon me, and would consider my sufferings. As the dew was very heavy, it at last filled the little channel. From time to time a wall could be heard falling in the village, or a roof breaking down. The animals, terrified by the battle, took courage when the dawn came. A goat was bleating in the neighbouring stable; a great shepherd's dog, with his tail hanging down, passed by, looking at the corpses; a horse, seeing him, began snorting in a terrible manner, perhaps taking him for a wolf, and the dog ran away.

All these details come back to me, for when one is near death one sees everything; one seems to say to oneself, "Look, listen, for soon thou wilt see and hear nothing more in this world!"

But what I remembered much more vividly, what I shall never forget if I live a hundred years, is hearing a sound of talking at a distance, and how I woke up, and I listened, and how I raised myself on my elbow to cry "Help!" It was still night, though a pale dawn was rising in the sky. Quite in the distance, across the rain which now fell slanting through the air, a light was moving in the midst of the field; it wandered to and fro, stopping here and there, and I saw black figures bending down round it. They were only confused shadows; but others besides myself saw this light, for on all sides groans and sighs were breathed into the night; plaintive cries from such feeble voices that it sounded like little children calling for their mothers.

Good Heaven, what is life? Of what does it consist that we put such a value upon it? The frail breath that makes us weep and suffer so much, why do we fear to lose it more than any-

thing else in the world? What is reserved for us after it, that the least thought of death makes us tremble? Who can tell? Men have been talking about it for centuries and centuries; all think about it, and no one can tell. As for me, in my wish to live, I gazed at this light as a wretch who is drowning gazes at the land. I held fast to see it, and my heart beat thick with hope. I wished to weep and cry, but my voice would not go far enough. The noise of the raindrops on the trees and roofs stopped one from hearing other things. And I said to myself, "They hear me; they will come for me!" I thought I saw the light coming along the garden, growing brighter at every step, and after wandering about for some time, it slowly died away.

Then I lost consciousness.

## CHAPTER XV

When I recovered consciousness, I was at one end of a large barn, built like a hall, with pillars all round it; somebody was giving me wine and water to drink, and I thought it delicious. When I opened my eyes I saw an old soldier, with a grey moustache, who was lifting up my head and holding the cup to my lips.

"Well," said he to me in a good-humoured way, "you are better now." I could not help smiling at him when I thought that I was still alive. My breast and left shoulder were firmly bound up; I felt something like a burn there, but I did not care for that—I was alive!

At first I looked at the big beams that crossed the roof above me, and the tiles, through which daylight shone in at more than one place; then, after a few moments, I turned my head, and saw that I was in one of those great outbuildings in which the brewers of that country store their tubs and their drays. All round, on mattresses and on trusses of hay, were crowds of wounded men, and in the middle, on a great kitchen table, the surgeon-major and his two helpers, with their shirt-sleeves tucked up, were cutting off somebody's leg; the wounded man uttered doleful cries. Behind them was a heap of arms and legs, and every one may imagine my feelings at the sight.

Five or six infantry soldiers were supplying the wounded with drink, from jugs and mugs that they carried about. But what made the greatest impression upon me was the sight of the surgeon in his shirt-sleeves, who was cutting away and seemed to hear nothing; he had a big nose and hollow cheeks, and was always grumbling at his assistants for not handing him his knives and scissors, or lint and linen, fast enough, or not wiping the blood away directly with their sponges, though the work went on anything but slowly, for in less than a quarter of an hour they had cut off two legs. Outside by the pillars a great waggon full of straw was waiting. They had just stretched on the table a Russian carabineer, at least six feet high, whose neck had been pierced by a bullet; and the surgeon was calling for his small knives, to do something to him, when another surgeon

passed in front of the building—a cavalry surgeon, short, fat, and quite grey. He carried a portfolio under his arm, and stopped near the waggon.

"Aha, Forel?" he cried out in a cheery voice.

"Ah, is it you, Duchene?" replied our surgeon, turning round. "How many wounded?"

"Seventeen to eighteen thousand."

"Parbleu! And how are you this morning?"

"Very well—I'm just looking for a wine-shop."

Our surgeon went out of the barn to shake hands with his comrade. They then began to talk quietly together, while the assistants refreshed themselves with a draught of wine, and the Russian rolled his eyes in a despairing way.

"Look, Duchene, you have only to go down the street, opposite the well yonder, do you see?"

"Quite well."

"Then, just opposite, you'll find a canteen."

"Ah, thank you. I will go."

With that the other one went away, and our surgeon called after him, "Good appetite, Duchene."

Then he came back to his Russian, who was waiting for him, and began by laying open his neck from the nape to the shoulder. He worked with an air of irritation, and kept saying to his assistants, "Now then, gentlemen, now then!"

The Russian groaned, as you may well imagine; but the surgeon took no notice of it; and at last, throwing a bullet on the ground, he put a bandage on, and said, "Take him away."

The Russian was lifted off the table, and the soldiers laid him on a palliasse, among a row of others, and the next was brought.

I never could have thought that such things went on in the world; but I saw much worse things than that, things whose recollection haunted me for a long time after. On the fifth or sixth mattress from mine sat an old corporal, with his leg bandaged up; he winked with his eye, and said to his neighbour, whose arm had just been cut off, "Conscript, just look at that heap yonder; I'll wager you don't recognise your arm among the rest."

The man to whom he spoke, who was deadly pale, but had shown the greatest nerve, looked, and the next moment he fainted.

Then the corporal began to laugh, and said, "He's recognised it at last. It is the one yonder, with the little blue flower tattooed on it—it always has that effect on them."

He quite prided himself on having found that out; but nobody laughed with him.

Every moment the wounded men were crying out for drink. When one began, all the others joined in. The old soldier had seemed to have taken a liking to me, for he always held out his mug to me every time he passed.

I did not stay there more than an hour. Some ten other waggons had been drawn up in line behind the first. Peasants of the country, in velvet waistcoats and broad-brimmed black hats, each with a cart-whip on his shoulder, were in attendance, holding their horses by the bridle. An escort of Hussars soon arrived, and the quartermaster dismounted, and entering our building, said, "Excuse me, Major, but here is an order to escort twelve waggons of wounded to Lutzen; am I to take them up here?" "Yes," replied the surgeon-major. And then they began loading the first file.

The peasants and ambulance men, before they carried us off, made us drink another good draught. Directly a waggon was full it was driven off, and another drew up. I was in the third, sitting on some straw in the first row, beside a conscript of the 27th Regiment, whose right hand was gone; behind me another was minus a leg, a third had his head split, a fourth his jaw shattered, and so on all through the vehicle.

They had given us back our big greatcoats, and in spite of the sunshine we were so cold that nothing was to be seen of us but our noses and our regulation caps, or the linen bandage above our collars. Nobody spoke; everybody had enough to occupy him in his own thoughts. Sometimes, for a moment, I felt terribly cold; then came gusts of heat, that seemed to mount up into my eyes. This was the beginning of the fever. But when we left Kaya all was still going well with me; I could see things clearly, and it was later on, when we got near Leipsic, that I felt really ill.

Well, that was the way they packed us in the waggons; those who could still manage to keep up were put into the foremost waggons, the others were stretched on their backs in the last, and off we went. The Hussars, on horseback beside us, chatted about the battle, and smoked and laughed, and took no notice of us.

On passing through Kaya I became aware of all the horrors of war. The village was nothing but a heap of ruins. The roofs had fallen; for long intervals the end walls only remained standing; the beams and laths had been smashed, and we could

see through into little rooms, with their doors and staircases. Poor people, women and children and old men, could be seen going about within, quite despairing; they went up and down quite exposed to view, as if they had been in cages. Sometimes, quite high up, appeared the chimney of some little room, where a little mirror, with branches of box over it, showed that in peaceable times some young girl had dwelt there.

Alas! who could have then foreseen that one day all this happiness would be destroyed, not by the fury of the winds or the anger of Heaven, but by the rage of men, much more formidable than they!

Even the poor domestic animals had a look of desolation about them among these ruins; there were pigeons looking for their dovecote, and oxen and goats seeking their accustomed stables. They wandered about disconsolately in the lanes, lowing and bleating in a most plaintive way. Fowls were perching on the trees, and everywhere appeared the cruel traces of cannon-balls. At the last house an old white-haired man sat on the threshold of his ruined dwelling, holding a little child between his knees. He stared at us as we went by with a dark, mournful look. Did he see us? I don't know; but his brow, marked with great furrows, and his listless eyes had a look of despair. How many years of labour, how much self-denial and suffering, must it have cost him to provide for himself a quiet old age! And now everything was destroyed, and the child and he had not a roof to shelter their heads!

And the great trenches, half-a-league long, at which all the people of the country were working in haste, to prevent pestilence from consummating the destruction of the human race. I have seen them from the top of the hill of Kaya, and have turned away my eyes in horror. Yes, I have seen the vast trenches in which the dead were buried—Russians, French, and Prussians, all together—men such as God had created that they might love each other, before the invention of plumes and uniforms, which divide them into factions for the profit of those who govern them. There they are, they embrace each other now, and if anything lives in them, as we must hope it does, they love and pardon one another, and abhor the crime which for so many years has prevented them from loving each other before their death.

But a still more mournful sight was presented by the long train of waggons carrying off the poor wounded men, those unhappy wretches who are not mentioned in the bulletins

except to understate their numbers, and who die in hospitals like flies, far from all those who love them; while cannon are fired, and hymns of rejoicing are sung in the churches, because thousands of men have been killed.

When we reached Lutzen, the town was so crowded with wounded that our column was ordered to go on to Leipsic. The streets were full of poor wretches, three parts dead, lying on straw in front of the houses. We took more than an hour getting to a church, where fifteen or twenty of us, who could bear the journey no longer, were taken down. The quartermaster and his men, after refreshing themselves at a wine-shop at the corner of the great square, mounted their horses again, and we set off for Leipsic. By that time I could see and hear nothing distinctly; my head was whirling, there was a buzzing in my ears, I mistook the trees for men, and felt such a thirst as no one can imagine.

Long since, others in the waggons had begun to shout and to rave, talking of their mothers, or wanted to get up and jump out on the road. I do not know if I did the same, but I woke up as if from a bad dream, just as two men took me by a leg each, with their other arm round my waist, and carried me away across a dark place. The sky was studded with stars; and on the front of a great building which stood out from the gloom around, a hundred lights were shining; it was the hospital of the Halle suburb of Leipsic.

The men carried me up a winding staircase. Right at the top, they went into an immense room, where long lines of beds, almost touching each other, were arranged in three rows, and I was put into one of the beds. It is impossible to describe the groans, oaths, and moanings that were heard; hundreds of wounded men were around, tossing in fever. The windows were open, and the little lanterns flickered in the draughts of air. Hospital men, doctors, and assistants, the last with aprons tied under their arms, were going to and fro. And the hollow murmur from the chambers beneath, the new trains arriving on the square outside, the cries of the waggoners, the cracking of whips and the scrambling of horses, were enough to make a man lose his head.

There, for the first time, while I was being undressed, I felt such a horrible pain in my shoulder, that I could not help crying out. A surgeon came up almost directly, and rebuked the men for carelessness in handling me. That is all I remember of that night, for I was like mad. I kept calling Catherine, Father

Goulden, and Aunt Grethel to help me, as my neighbour afterwards told me; he was an old mounted artilleryman, and my exclamations spoiled his night's rest. It was not until next morning, towards eight o'clock, when my wound was dressed for the first time, that I saw the hall clearly. Then I knew that my left shoulder-bone was broken.

When I awoke I was surrounded by a dozen doctors. One of them, a stout, dark man, whom they called M. le Baron, was opening my bandage; an assistant, at the foot of the bed, was holding a basin of hot water. The chief surgeon examined my wound, and all the others leant forward to hear what he would say. He spoke to them for a few moments; but all that I could understand was that the ball had entered from below, and taken an upward course; that it had broken the bone, and passed out at the back. I saw that this man understood his profession well; for the Prussians had been firing from below, aiming over the top of the garden wall, so that the bullet must have risen. He washed the wound himself, and put back the bandage with two turns of his hand, so that I could not move my shoulder, and everything was in order. I felt much better. Ten minutes afterwards, an hospital attendant came and put me on a shirt. He was so well used to the work that he did not hurt me.

The surgeon then stopped at the next bed, and said, "What! here you are again, my old friend!"

"Yes, baron, here I am again," answered the artilleryman, quite proud to see that he was recognised. "The first time it was at Austerlitz, from canister-shot, and then at Jena, and then for a couple of lance-thrusts at Smolensk."

"Yes, yes," said the surgeon, in a kind voice, "and what is the matter with us now?"

"Three sabre-cuts on the left arm, got in defending my piece against the Prussian Hussars."

The surgeon stepped up to him and undid the bandage, and I heard him say to the artilleryman, "Have you the cross?"

"No, baron," he replied.

"What is your name?"

"Christian Zimmer, quartermaster in the 2nd Regiment of horse artillery."

"Ah! very good, very good." Then he dressed the man's wounds, and said as he rose, "All will be well."

Then he turned away, talking with the others, and went

away after finishing his rounds and giving some directions to the hospital attendants.

The old artilleryman seemed in high spirits; and as I heard from his name that he must be an Alsatian, I began to talk to him in our native language, which gladdened him still more. He was a great fellow, six feet high, round-shouldered, with a flat forehead, a big nose, and reddish-brown moustache; as hard as a rock, but a worthy man for all that. He puckered up his eyes with pleasure, and pricked up his ears when I spoke to him in the Alsatian dialect. I might have asked him for anything in that tongue, and he would have given it me, if he had had anything to give; but he had nothing to offer but grasps of the hand that made your bones crack. He called me Josephel, after our country fashion, and said to me, "Josephel, mind how you swallow the physic they give you. One ought only to swallow what one knows, and whatever doesn't smell good is no use. If they would give us a bottle of Rivekir wine every day we should be cured; but it suits them better to spoil our stomachs with a handful of nasty boiled herbs than to bring us some white Alsace wine."

When I was afraid because of the fever and of what I saw about me, it seemed to put him out of temper. He would look at me with his great grey eyes, and say, "Josephel, are you crazy to be afraid? Are we the kind of fellows who can die in an hospital? No, no, just put that idea out of your head." But in spite of all he could say, the doctors, when they made their rounds, used to find seven or eight men dead every morning. Some got burning fever, others got a chill, and the end of it was that the bier was brought in, and they were carried out on the attendants' shoulders; so I never knew whether I ought to feel hot or cold to be going on well.

Zimmer used to say to me, "All that, Josephel, comes from the bad drugs that the doctors invent. Do you see that tall thin man? He can boast of having killed more men than a fieldpiece; you may say that he's always full charged with canister and the match lighted. And that little dark fellow? If I were the emperor I should send him to the Russians and Prussians; he would kill more of them than a whole army corps could dispose of."

I should have laughed heartily at his jokes if I had not seen the biers pass so often. At the end of three weeks the bone of my shoulder began to harden; the two wounds gradually closed, and I suffered hardly any pain. The sabre-cut that Zimmer had

received on his arm and shoulder were also going on very well. Every morning they gave us some good beef soup that put new life into us; and in the evening we had a little beef, with half a glass of wine, the mere sight of which rejoiced us so much that we saw all the future in rosy colours.

About this time we were allowed to go down into the large garden, filled with old elms, behind the hospital. There were benches under the trees, and we used to walk through the avenues like gentlemen, in our grey overcoats and cotton caps.

The season was magnificent, and our view extended over the Partha, which was fringed with poplars. This river falls into the Elster on the left, and looked to us like a long blue line. There is a forest in the same direction, and in the foreground three or four great white roads, running through fields of wheat, barley, and oats, through plantations of hemp, all in fine cultivation, and very agreeable to look at, especially when the wind passed over it, and all these crops waved up and down in the sunlight. The heat in the month of June promised a good harvest. When I looked at this beautiful country I thought of Phalsbourg, and began to shed tears. Then would Zimmer say to me, "I should very much like to know why you are crying, Josephel? Instead of having caught the hospital fever, or having lost a leg or an arm like hundreds of others, here we are quietly sitting on a bench in the shade. They give us soup, and meat, and wine; we are even allowed to smoke when we have any tobacco, and yet you are not satisfied. What is it you want?"

Then I told him of my love for Catherine, of my walks to Quatre Vents, of our bright hopes, of our promise of marriage, and, in fact, of all those good times that had now passed away like a dream. He listened to me, smoking his pipe the while.

"Yes, yes," he said, "it's a pity, I grant you. Before the conscription of 1798 I was also to have been married to a girl of our village. Margrethel was her name, and I loved her like the apple of my eye. We exchanged promises of marriage; and during the whole Zurich campaign, there was not a day on which I did not think of Margrethel. But when I got my first furlough, I went back to my own place, and what did I find on my arrival?—why, that she had married, three months before, a shoemaker of our village, named Passauf. You can fancy what a rage I was in, Josephel. I could not see clearly before me, and felt inclined to smash everything; and as they told me Passauf was in the brewery of the Great Stag, I went straight there without looking to the right or to the left. When I got

there I saw him at the end of the table, near one of the windows looking out into the court by the pump. He was laughing with three or four other bad fellows, and drinking mugs of beer. I went up, and then he called out, 'Look there! it's Christian Zimmer! How are you, Christian? I've a greeting for you from Margrethel.'

"And then he winked his eye. I caught up a jug, and broke it over his left ear; and I said to him, 'Go and carry that to her from me, Passauf; it's my wedding present.' Of course all the rest of them fell upon me. I marked two or three with a pitcher; then jumped on a table, got my leg astride a window that looked upon the court, and so beat a retreat. But I had hardly got to my mother's house before the gendarmes came up, and I was arrested by order of a superior officer. They bound me on a cart, and so carried me from brigade to brigade till I got to my own regiment, which was quartered at Strasburg. For six weeks I remained at Finckmatt, and perhaps I should have had a taste of a prison fortress with a cannon-ball at my leg if we had not just then been crossing the Rhine to go to Hohenlinden. Commandant Courtand himself said to me, 'You may consider yourself lucky that you are a good pioneer; but if ever you take upon yourself to beat people with jugs again, I warn you that it will turn out badly for you. Is that the way to fight, you blockhead? What do we wear a sabre for but to use it, and to make a name for ourselves in the country?' I had not a word to say in reply.

"After that, Josephel, I felt no further inclination to marry. Don't talk to me about a soldier thinking of his wife; it's a great mistake. Look at the generals who have married. Do they fight as they did in the old times? No, they have only a single idea, and that is to increase their money, and to enjoy it, by living comfortably with their duchesses and their little dukes, by the fireside. My grandfather, Yeri, the gamekeeper, used always to say that a good dog ought to be thin. Barring the difference of rank, I think the same with regard to good generals and good soldiers. We privates are always under rule and regiment; but our generals get fat, and that's because of the good dinners they eat at home."

This is how Zimmer used to talk to me in the openness of his heart, but I felt sad in spite of all. So soon as I could get up, I had lost no time in letting Father Goulden know by letter that I was in Halle hospital, in one of the suburbs of Leipsic, on account of a wound in the arm, but that they must not be alarmed about

me, for that I was getting better every day. I begged him to show my letter to Catherine and to Aunt Grethel, to give them confidence in the midst of this terrible war. I also said that my greatest happiness would be to hear news from home, and to hear that all I loved were in good health.

After that I had no rest. I expected an answer every morning, and to see the baggage-master distributing twenty or thirty letters in the room when there was none for me made my heart bleed; I used to go down hastily into the garden and there shed tears. There was a dark corner into which they used to throw the broken crockery; a shady corner, which I liked best of all, because the patients never came there. Here I used to pass my time, in brooding thought, on an old worm-eaten bench. Unhappy ideas came into my head, and I even thought that Catherine could forget her promise; and I said to myself, "Ah, if you had only not got up again at Kaya, then all would be over. Why did they not leave you to your fate? It would have been better than to suffer thus."

Things had got so bad with me that I wished I might not get well; when, one morning, the baggage-master called out, among other names, that of Joseph Bertha. Then I held up my hand, unable to utter a word, and they put into it a great square letter, covered with a number of postmarks. I recognised the handwriting of M. Goulden, and turned quite pale. "Well," said Zimmer, laughing, "you see it has come at last." I did not answer him, but directly I had dressed myself I put the letter into my pocket and went down to read it by myself, at the end of the garden, in the corner where I usually sat.

Directly I opened it I saw two or three little apple-blossoms, which I took out, and a draft on the post-office, with a few words written by M. Goulden. But it was not that which touched me most and made me tremble from head to foot; it was the writing of Catherine, which I looked at with troubled eyes, unable at first to read it, for my heart was beating violently.

At last I grew more calm, and read the letter softly to myself, stopping every now and then to make quite sure that I was not mistaken, that it was really my dear Catherine who was writing to me, and that I was not in a dream. I have preserved this letter because, so to speak, it gave me back my life; and here it is, just as I received it on the 8th of June 1813:—

"My dear Joseph,—I write this letter to tell you at the very beginning that I love you more and more, and that I will never love any one but you.

"You must also know that it is the greatest sorrow to me to learn that you are lying wounded in a hospital, and that I am not with you to take good care of you. It is a very great sorrow, and since the conscripts went away we have not had a single hour's peace. My mother was angry with me, and said that I was foolish to cry day and night; and all the time she cried just as much as I did, all alone, in the evening by the stove. I could hear her upstairs; and her anger fell upon Pinacle, who did not dare to come to our market, because my mother kept a hammer in her basket.

"But our greatest sorrow of all, Joseph, was when the report came that a great battle had been fought, in which thousands upon thousands of men had been killed. We could hardly contain ourselves: my mother was running to the post every morning, and I could no longer get up out of my bed. But at last our letter came. Now I feel better, because I can weep quietly, and bless the Saviour who preserved your life.

"And when I think, Joseph, how happy we were in those times, when you used to come every Sunday, and we used to sit quietly by one another, not thinking of sorrow to come—ah, we did not know how happy we were then—we did not know what was going to happen; but the will of God be done! If you only get well, and if we may only hope to be once more together, as we used to be!

"Many people are talking about peace; but we have undergone so many misfortunes, and the Emperor Napoleon is so fond of war, that one must not believe in anything.

"My greatest consolation is to know that your wound is not dangerous, and that you love me still. Ah, Joseph, I shall always love you; I can say no more than this; it is all I can tell you, from the bottom of my heart; and I know that my mother loves you dearly too.

"Now, as Father Goulden wants to write a few words to you, I embrace you a thousand and a thousand times. The weather is very fine here; we shall have a good year. The great apple-tree in our orchard is quite white with blossoms; I am going to pick some and send them to you in the letter, when M. Goulden has done writing; perhaps, through the mercy of God, we shall yet eat one of these great apples together. Embrace me as I embrace you, and good-bye, good-bye, dear Joseph."

On reading this I shed tears, and Zimmer having come up, I said to him, "Sit down here, and I will read you what my

sweetheart writes to me; and you shall see if she is a Margrethel."

"First let me light my pipe," he answered. He shut down the lid of the bowl on the bit of tinder, and then said, "You may begin, Josephel; but I give you notice that I am an old fellow, and therefore don't believe everything that is written. Women are more cunning than we are."

For all that I read him Catherine's letter slowly. He did not interrupt me; and when I said I had done, he took it from my hand, and looked at it thoughtfully for a long time; then he said, "Yes, Josephel; that is a good girl, full of good sense, and she will never take any one for her husband but you."

"You think she loves me dearly?"

"Oh, you may depend upon that girl; she'll never marry a Passauf. I would rather mistrust the emperor than a girl like that." When I heard Zimmer talk thus, I felt ready to embrace him, and I said, "I've received a note of a hundred francs from home, and we can cash it at the post-office. There will be the money for some wine. Let us try and get out from here."

"That is well said," he replied, twirling his big moustache, and putting his pipe into his pocket. "I don't like to grow mouldy here when there's a wineshop outside. Let us try and get leave."

We rose quite joyously, and were going up the staircase of the hospital, when the baggage-master, who was coming down, stopped my companion, and said to him, "Are not you Christian Zimmer, of the 2nd Horse Artillery?"

"Under favour, baggage-master, I have that honour."

"Well, then, there's something for you," he said, and he gave him a little packet and a big letter. Zimmer stood stupefied with astonishment, for he had never received anything from home or from elsewhere. He opened the packet, which contained a box; he opened the box, and in it was the Cross of the Legion of Honour. Then he turned quite pale; his eyes grew dim, and for a moment he put his hand behind him, and leant against the balustrade; then he shouted, "Vive l'Empereur!" with such a terrible voice that the three rooms echoed like a church.

Then the baggage-master looked at him good-humouredly, and said—"Ah, you are pleased, I warrant!"

"I'm pleased indeed, baggage-master! Now I only want one thing."

"And what's that?"

" Leave to take a turn in the town."

" You must address your request to M. Tardieu, the surgeon-major." We went downstairs rejoicing; and as it was the hour when the surgeons made their rounds, we went away arm-in-arm to ask permission of the surgeon-major, an old grey-headed man, who had heard the cry of " Vive l'Empereur! " He examined us with a grave face, and inquired what was the matter, and then Zimmer showed him his cross, and said, " The major will pardon me, but I am as well as can be."

M. Tardieu replied that he quite understood, and did he want a pass? Zimmer asked for a pass for himself and for me, so the surgeon inspected my wound, and gave us the desired permission. We went down as happy as kings, Zimmer with his cross, and I with my letter. In the hall the porter cried out, " Well, where are you going to? " So Zimmer showed him our passes, and out we went, happy to breathe the fresh air once more. A sentry showed us the way to the post-office, where I cashed my order.

And then, feeling graver, for our joy had sobered down a little, we reached the gate of Halle, two gun-shots on the left, at the end of an avenue of lindens. Every suburb of the town is separated from the old fortifications by an avenue, and all round the city another broad avenue extends. These ramparts are very old, and rather like those at St. Hippolyte in the Department of the Upper Rhine. The walls were crumbling, and grass was growing over them, as it is now, unless the Germans have since repaired them.

## CHAPTER XVI

It was our lot to discover many things that day. In the hospital nobody concerns himself about anybody else. We saw wounded men arrive every morning by the score, and carried away at night. It really seemed like a little picture of life, and reminded us that, after all, the end of the world will come. But, once outside, our ideas underwent a change. The sight of the large street and the great town with its warehouses and roadways filled with merchandise, the old roofs projecting over the road, the broad carts laden with goods, and all this show of active commercial life, quite surprised me; I had never seen anything like it, and I said to myself, "This is just such a commercial city as one pictures to one's self, quite full of busy people trying to earn their living and to amass riches; a city in which every man desires to raise himself, not by doing harm to others, but by working and thinking by day and by night, in order to discover fresh means by which his family may prosper. All this does not stop the rest of the world from profiting by discoveries and inventions. It really seems like the happiness of peace in the midst of dreadful war."

But the unhappy wounded men, crawling about with arms in slings, or dragging one leg after the other, or leaning on crutches, made my heart sore as I looked at them. I walked on thoughtfully under the guidance of my friend Zimmer, who knew every corner of the town, and kept saying, "There is the church of St. Nicholas; that large building is the university; there is the town-hall." He knew all this, as he had been in Leipsic in 1807, before the battle of Friedland, and then he would add, "We are really quite as much at home here as if we were at Metz or Strasburg, or any other town in France, for the people are well disposed towards us. After the campaign of 1806, they showed us every civility; they used to carry us off to their houses to dine with them; they would give balls in our honour, and they called us the heroes of Jena. You will soon see how much they love us. We can go where we will, and we shall be looked upon as the friends of the country, for we made their elector into King of Saxony, and we also gave him a large slice of Poland." And then Zimmer stopped in front of

a little low archway, and said, "See, this is the café of the Golden Lamb; its front entrance is in the other street, but we can go in this way." So I followed him into a crooked passage, which led into a courtyard. The backs of houses were all around us, with weather-beaten galleries on the lower stories, and gabled roofs, just like the street of the tanners at Strasburg. The brewery was to the right, and we could see little tubs with copper hooks and large heaps of barley and malt, while in the corner was a great wheel which a large dog was turning, in order to pump the beer up to the different parts of the house. The noise of glasses and mugs clinking together sounded from the room near us that looked out on the street. Under the windows of this room was a large cellar, which resounded with the blows of the barrel-maker's hammer. The air was filled with the fragrant odour of new spring beer, and Zimmer raised his eyes to the roof, while his face was full of satisfaction, and said, "Oh, yes, it was here that we came—the big Ferre, stout Rousillon, and I. Good gracious! how glad I am to see all this again, little Joseph! It is true that six years have passed since then. As for poor old Rousillon, his bones were left at Smolensk last year, and Ferre is probably in his own village near Toul, for his left leg was shot away at Wagram. Everything seems to come back to me as I look around." On saying this, he pushed the door open, and we entered a lofty hall, full of smoke. It was some little time before I could see through the mist many long tables, and men sitting round them drinking. Most of them wore short coats and little caps, while others wore the uniforms of Saxony. They were nearly all students—young men of good family who had come to Leipsic to study medicine, or the law, or other things, and while there they led a very merry life, and they called these meetings Students' Frolics. Very often they fought duels with a sword rounded at the end, and only sharpened a little way up, so that they might scar their faces, but their lives were never in danger. This showed that these students had plenty of sense, for they knew that life is a precious thing, and it is better to hold it, even if you have five or six scars, than to lose it. Old Zimmer laughed as he told me all this, for his love of what he called glory blinded him. He ridiculed their mode of fighting, and said that one might as well use guns or cannon to roast potatoes as fight with swords that were only sharpened at the tip.

When we went into the hall we saw the oldest student, a tall, thin man with deep sunken eyes and flaxen moustache; he

had been drinking beer, and was standing on the table, reading aloud from a paper, which hung down from his right hand; in the other hand he held a long china pipe. All the other students, with long, light, wavy hair reaching to the collars of their coats, listened with lifted mugs, and just as we entered we heard them crying out very loudly, "The Fatherland, the Fatherland!" They touched their mugs with those of the Saxon soldiers, and the tall thin man stooped to pick up his own, and then a big, burly brewer, with short grey hair, flat nose, round eyes, and chubby cheeks, cried out in a hoarse whisper, "Gesundheit! gesundheit!" As soon as we advanced a few steps into the smoke, everything was still. Then Zimmer said, "Come on, come on, comrades, don't stand on ceremony; go on reading. The devil take it, we should be glad to hear the news also." But the young man refused to respond to our invitation; he came down from the table, folded up the paper, put it into his pocket, and said it was all finished. The others also cried out that it was all finished, and as they did so, they looked at one another in a strange way. Then some Saxon soldiers went out and disappeared, and the tavern-keeper came up to us and said, "Perhaps you are not aware that the great hall is in the Tilly Strasse." Zimmer replied, "Oh, yes, we know well enough; but we prefer this smaller room. I and my two good comrades used to come here a long time ago and drink a glass in honour of Jena and Auerstadt. The room brings back pleasant recollections to me."

"As you please," said the brewer. "Do you want spring beer?" Zimmer replied, "Yes, two mugs and a newspaper." The brewer soon gave us the beer, and Zimmer, who failed to notice anything unusual, began to talk with the students, but they refused to respond to him, and went away one after another.

I could then see that all these people hated us with a hatred that was the more violent because they dared not show it. In the newspaper was a report from France of an armistice, after two victories of our troops at Bautzen and Lutzen. It said that the armistice began on 6th June, and that conferences were now being held to negotiate a peace at the city of Prague in Bohemia. Of course, I was glad to hear the news, and I hoped that at any rate the wounded would be sent home; but Zimmer had a habit of thinking aloud, and the whole room had the benefit of his thoughts. He interrupted me in every line, and kept on remarking, "Why do we want an armistice? After beating the Russians and Prussians at Lutzen, and Wurtzen and Bautzen,

we ought to destroy them all together. If they had beaten us, they would never have given us peace; but, you see, Joseph, that is the emperor's character; he is too kind, and that is his only fault. He acted in the same way after Austerlitz, and we had to begin the same game over again. He is much too good-hearted; if he were not so kind, we should now have been masters of all Europe." And then he looked at the right and then at the left of him, as though he would take the opinion of the company present; but everybody looked sulky, and nobody answered.

Then Zimmer got up and said, " Joseph, let us go. I do not understand politics myself, but I think we ought not to give peace to these rascals; now we have thrown them down, we ought to march off over their bodies." Then we went out, after paying for our beer, and Zimmer remarked, " I cannot think what is the matter with these people to-day; we must have disturbed them in some way." I replied, " Very likely, they do not seem to be half such jovial fellows as you said they were." " No," he replied, " these young folks are very different from the old students whom I used to see, those who used to spend most of their lives in the café; they would drink twenty or thirty mugs of beer a day, and even I, Joseph, was not able to hold my own against them. They were terrible fellows, especially five or six of them, whom they called seniors, with grey beards and a venerable look. We used to sing songs, " Fanfan-la-Tulipe," or " King Dagobert," which was not political, but the fellows who are here now are not half as good as the old ones." Afterwards I often thought of what we saw that day, for events convinced me that all the students belonged to the Tugenbund. Then we returned to the hospital after having dinner and drinking a bottle of wine each at the " Grape Inn " in the Tilly Strasse, and Zimmer and I were told we were to sleep that night at the barracks in the Rosenthal. This was a place filled with wounded from the battle of Lutzen when they began to recover from their wounds. The life there was the same as in barracks, and we had to answer the roll call every morning and every night, though the rest of the day was free. Every third day the doctor visited us, and as soon as the men were well, they received their tickets to march and join their regiments. You can imagine the position of twelve or fifteen hundred convalescents dressed in grey overcoats and shining buttons, with large shakos shaped like flower-pots on their heads, their shoes worn by marching and

counter-marching, pale, unhappy, and penniless, though in a rich town like Leipsic. We presented a very poor figure to the students and citizens, and especially to the laughing girls, who, despite all our glory, looked upon us as very ruffled birds, and all the grand stories that Zimmer had told me made me feel more uncomfortable even than before. It is quite true that once upon a time we had been received well, but unfortunately our soldiers had not always behaved very well towards the people who had treated them as though they were their own brothers. The consequences were the doors were now slammed in our faces, and we were able to do nothing but walk about the squares, go into the churches, and admire the shops, which were very handsome in that town. Of course we amused ourselves as best we could; the veterans used to play cards at the cafés, and the conscripts at the canteen. We played a game called "cat and rat" in front of the barracks. A pole was driven into the ground, and two ropes were attached to it; it is the duty of the rat to hold one of these ropes, and the cat the other. The person who is armed as the cat has a short stick, and tries to get at the rat, who does his best to avoid him, and so they run round the stick, and the company greatly admire their agility. Zimmer told me that in old days the Germans used to come in large crowds to witness this game, and that you could hear their laughing a long way off, especially when the cat touched the rat with his stick. But now the times had changed; the people passed by without so much as looking, and our labour was lost in trying to get favour. We remained at the Rosenthal Barracks for six weeks. Zimmer and I used to walk around the town every day. It was our custom to go by the suburb of Rosentadt as far as Lindenthal, on the way to Lutzen. There were numerous bridges and swamps with little wooded valleys as far as we could see. At Lindenthal we would eat an omelette, fried with bacon, at the café called "The Carp," and wash it down with a bottle of white wine. They would not serve us on credit now, as they did after the battle of Jena. So far from doing so, I think the people would have made us pay twice over in honour of the German Fatherland, if Zimmer had not known the accurate price of eggs or bacon or wines as well as any German amongst them. In the evening at sunset, when the sky was red behind the swamps, we walked back to the town and heard the melancholy croaking of the frogs which lived in the marshes. Sometimes we would stand still, and lean, with our arms folded, on the parapet of the bridge, and look at the old

walls of Leipsic, at its churches, at its stone houses, and Castle of Pleossenburg shining in the ruddy evening glow. The town extends right up to the junction of the Rivers Partha and Pleisse, where they unite their streams. It is in the shape of a fan; the Halle suburb is at one point, and seven other suburbs are at the other points of the fan. We looked at the numerous branches of the rivers crossing and re-crossing like a network, and although it was dark the water seemed to shine like gold, and presented a very beautiful appearance.

If we had only known that one day it would be our lot to cross these rivers under the fire of the enemy's guns after a defeat in the most terrible and bloody of battles, and that whole battalions would disappear from view in the waters that now shone so peacefully, I think the view would have made us very unhappy. Sometimes we walked along by the side of the River Pleisse as far as the Mark Kleeberg. This was about three miles, and over the whole distance the ground was covered with crops which the people were hurrying to gather in. The peasants, as they sat on their big waggons, pretended not to see us, and when we asked for information, they refused to give it. Zimmer was always angry, but I managed to hold him back by telling him that these rascals would be glad of the opportunity to fall upon us, and moreover we had our orders to be civil to everybody, and then he would reply, "All right, but if the war happens to come this way, let them look to themselves. In return for all the favours we have done them, this is what we get." But something showed us much more than this the ill-will of the people towards us. It happened a day or two after the armistice was concluded; about eleven o'clock we were going to bathe in the River Elster. Zimmer, seeing a peasant coming our way along the road from Konnewitz, asked him if there was any danger in that part of the river. The man replied boldly that there was no danger at all, it was a very safe place; so without hesitation Zimmer jumped in and discovered that he had jumped into fifteen feet of water. He was a good swimmer, but his left arm was still weak, and the force of the current carried him so rapidly that he had no time even to catch hold of the branches of willow that bent down to the water. If he had not managed to find a foothold farther down, he would have been washed between the mud islets and would never have got out. The peasant remained on the road to see what happened. I was very angry and dressed in a hurry, shaking my fist at him, but he began to laugh and

ran for the village as fast as he could. Zimmer was frantic with rage, and wished to run after the man there and then, but it was futile to attempt to discover a person when hiding amongst three or four hundred houses, and even if we did find him, what could we do to him? At last we found a place that we could easily ford, and the dip cooled us. On the way back to Leipsic, Zimmer spoke of nothing else but vengeance. He said: "The whole nation is against us, the burghers are sulky, the women refuse to look at us, the peasants try to drown us, the inn-keepers will not give us credit, just as if we had not beaten them three or four times over. And this is the result of our kindness to them; we ought to have let them know that we are really their masters. We have permitted these Germans to retain their kings and princes, and we have even honoured their towns and villages by naming our dukes and counts and other nobles after them, and this is our reward and their gratitude. Instead of being ordered to respect people, we should have had power to chastise them, and then the rascals would look at us very differently, as they did in 1806; you see force is everything. First, conscripts are made by force, for if they were not forced to become conscripts, they would remain at home; and out of conscripts soldiers are made by force, and it is done by explaining what discipline means, and you can make people give you everything you wish, if you could only force them. They will even call you heroes and erect triumphal arches for you if they fear you; that is the way of the world, but the emperor is too kind. If he had not been so kind, I should not have been nearly drowned to-day, and my uniform would have made that peasant afraid to tell me a lie."

This is what Zimmer said, and all these things are quite green in my memory still; they occurred on the 12th August 1813. On returning to Leipsic, we found the people were very joyful; it was not openly displayed, but when the burghers met in the streets they stopped and shook hands. The women smiled and chattered, and whispering went on and nodding amongst the very servants and waiters, and even among the peasants. Zimmer remarked that one would think the Germans were very jovial about something, their spirits seemed so high. I replied that it was perhaps on account of the fine weather, and gathering in the harvest; the weather certainly was beautiful, but when we came to Rosenthal Barracks, we found the officers talking together very earnestly in the great archway, the men on guard were listening, and the peasants also were trying to hear what

they said. We were told that the Conference of Prague had been terminated, and that Austria had declared war against us, which gave us two hundred thousand more men to contend with. I was afterwards told that there were then about three hundred thousand on our side and five hundred and twenty thousand against us, and amongst our enemies were two old French generals, Moreau and Bernadotte. Of course everybody has read this in history, but at the time we did not know it, and we felt as sure of gaining a victory as if we had never lost a battle. The sullen looks of the people did not frighten us at all. In time of war the burghers and peasants count for nothing; it is the custom to demand from them money and provisions, and these they supply, well knowing that if they refused the things would be taken from them, and they would not be paid for them. The day after this news reached us, there was a general review, and twelve thousand men, who had been wounded at Lutzen, now having nearly recovered, received orders to join their regiments. They marched away by companies with arms and baggage; some took the road to Altenburg by the side of the Elster, while others went to the left by the road to Wurtzen. Zimmer was amongst them, for he himself had applied for permission to go. I went with him as far as the gate, and with much emotion we embraced. I was obliged to stay behind for my arm was not yet strong enough. There were only five or six hundred of us left, and amongst them were a certain number of teachers of fencing and dancing, or of fencing-drill, the sort of people you always find hanging about near barracks. I had no wish to know them. I derived consolation only by thinking of Catherine, and sometimes of my old comrades Zebedee and Klipfel, of whom I had no news; truly it was a very solitary life, the people looked at us most sullenly, although they dared not say anything, knowing that the whole French army was only four days' march off, and Blücher and Schwartzenberg a long way behind. If it had not been for that they would have fallen upon us.

One evening the tidings came that our army had gained a great victory at Dresden. This caused much consternation in Leipsic, and the people remained indoors. I went to read the newspaper at the Grape Inn in the Tilly Strasse; the French papers were lying on the table; no one would touch them but myself.

But only the next week, in the beginning of September, I again saw the same expression on the people's faces that I had

observed when the news came that Austria had declared war against us. I thought that we must have met with some defeat or other, and I afterwards discovered that I was right, although the French newspapers said nothing about it. At the end of August the weather turned very wet and the rain fell in torrents. I remained within the barracks, and often, sitting on my bed and looking out of my window at the River Elster rushing along with its swollen waves and the trees on the little islets bending beneath the gusty winds, I thought, "Alas! poor comrades, good soldiers, what are you doing now? and where are you now? Are you marching on the roads, or are you in the fields?" Though it was a very depressing life, I thought they were more to be pitied than I was. At last one day the old doctor, Tardieu, on going his rounds, said to me, "I think your arm is strong now; let me see you lift it." And so next day when the roll was called I was ordered into a room where they keep articles of clothing and cartridges, and ammunition of every sort in great quantities. They gave me a musket, cartridges, and a route-ticket, for I was to join the 6th Regiment at Gauernitz on the River Elbe. This was on the 1st October. Twelve or fourteen of us set out on the march together with the sergeant of the 27th Regiment named Poitevin in command. On the road first one and then another left us and joined his regiment, but Poitevin, four foot-soldiers and myself continued the journey together, as far as the village of Gauerrnitz.

## CHAPTER XVII

And so we marched on with our muskets on our shoulders following the high road to Wurtzen. We walked with the long skirts of our overcoats fastened back; our backs bent beneath our heavy knapsacks; and our faces downcast, as you will readily imagine. The rain was falling and the water running from our hats right down our necks. The wind shook the poplar trees, and the yellow leaves floated all around us, heralding the approach of the winter. In this way we went on for many hours. Sometimes we entered villages with their barns, farmyards, and gardens. Behind the dark window-panes, the women stood and watched us march past. Now and then a dog would bark, and the woodcutter in front of his door would look round and follow us with his eyes. But on we marched, bespattered with mire and rain. After passing through the villages there was the main road, stretching away as far as I could see. A grey autumnal mist floated over the fields, and the lean rooks sailed softly overhead, uttering their doleful croaks. You could not imagine a more mournful spectacle, especially when it is remembered that winter was coming on very soon, and we should then have to sleep in the snow. Accordingly, there was very little conversation, except from Quartermaster Poitevin, an old veteran with yellow, furrowed, and scarred cheeks, long moustache, and a red, brandy-drinking nose. He seemed to have had a certain amount of education, but his sentences were intermingled with barrack slang. When the rain pelted down heavier than ever he would say to himself with a fatuous laugh, "Yes, yes, Poitevin, this will teach you to hiss." The old drunkard had discovered that I had a little money in my pocket, so he kept by my side, and often said, "Conscript, if you find your knapsack troubles you, allow me to carry it;" but I declined his kind offer with thanks. Notwithstanding my annoyance at being placed with a man who looked longingly at all the tavern signs when we passed through a village, and who was always saying that a little glass would be a fine thing in such weather as this, I could not help buying him a drop now and then, which made him stick to me more

closely than ever. We were now approaching Wurtzen, and the rain was falling in torrents. The quartermaster murmured for the twentieth time, "Yes, Poitevin, such is life; this will teach you to hiss." I could endure it no longer, and said to him: "What in the world do you mean by that, Quartermaster? How can the rain teach you to hiss?"

He replied, "It is not a proverb, as you may suppose, conscript; it is an idea that comes into my head when I have nothing to do. I would like you to know that in the year 1806 I was studying at Rouen, and something induced me to hiss a play being performed at the theatre, like many other fellows who were with me. Of course, as we hissed, others applauded, and it came to a general fight. The result was that very many of us found ourselves locked up in prison, and the emperor happening to hear of the affair, remarked, 'As they are so fond of fighting, let them join my armies; there they will have an opportunity of satisfying their tastes.'"

And of course what the emperor said was immediately done, for no one in the country dared to suggest opposition, not even the fathers and mothers of the conscripts."

"You were a conscript, then?" I said.

"No," he replied, "my father managed to purchase a substitute for me. It was a joke on the part of the emperor. One of those jokes that a man does not forget for a long time. Twenty or thirty of us have died, others, instead of filling positions of honour in our country as doctors, judges, or lawyers, have become drunkards. There is a pretty comedy for you."

With this he began to laugh, and looked at me out of the corners of his eyes. I had become thoughtful, and several times more before we reached Gauernitz I paid for a glass of drink for this poor devil.

About five o'clock in the afternoon, when we were approaching the village of Riesa, we saw an old mill on our left with a wooden bridge, and a path leading near it. We entered this path in order to make a short cut, and were only about two hundred yards from the mill, when we heard a great shouting. The same moment two women, one very old and the other young, ran across the garden patch, dragging some children along with them. They were trying to reach a little wood which adjoined the road on the ridge in front. Almost immediately after this, we saw several of our soldiers coming out of the mill with sacks; others were coming from the cellars with little tubs, which they hurriedly placed in a cart near the mill-

stream; others were taking horses and cattle out of the stable. The old man stood before the door with his hands uplifted to heaven. Five or six of these fellows surrounded the miller, who stood as pale as marble with his eyes starting from his head. The entire scene, the mill, the stream, the broken windows, the flying women and children, our soldiers in their shakos looking like thieves and robbers with the old man cursing them, while the cows were being dragged away, and being pricked by the bayonets of the troops—all this produced such a vivid picture on my mind that I shall never forget it. Poitevin pointed to them and said, "These are robbers; they are not found far from the army."

I cried, "But it is shameful; these men are brigands."

"Yes," replied Poitevin, "it is an offence against discipline. If the emperor knew it he would cause them to be shot like dogs."

We had crossed the bridge, and one of the little tubs had been tapped, when the soldiers came crowding around with a mug and began drinking in turn. This roused the anger of the quartermaster, who called out in a loud voice, "By whose authority do you pillage in this manner?"

Some of them turned their heads, and seeing that there were only three of us, the rest having gone on in advance, one replied, "Ah! old joker, I suppose you want your share of the good things. That is quite natural, but you need not twist your moustache so much about it. Come and have a drink."

With this, he held up a mug, and the quartermaster took it and gave me a wink, and drank.

Then he said, "Young man, if you feel inclined, do likewise; this is a famous wine."

I thanked him, but refused. Then several men around us told us to get on, as we were already late. Others cried, "No, no, wait a little while; we must see if there is anything else."

"Come, come," said the quartermaster, mildly expostulating with them, "my comrades, you know that we must go gently."

"Quite right, old man," answered a sort of drum-major, with a cocked hat, the ends of which pointed over his shoulders. He stood looking in a mocking manner with his eyes half closed, and said, "Make yourselves quite easy, we will pluck the fowls according to rule; we shall be considerate, yes, very considerate." Then Poitevin said nothing more, but he seemed half ashamed as he looked at me.

"What will you have, young man?" he said to me, as we were marching out briskly to overtake our comrades. "War

is war after all, and so are war customs. We cannot sit still and die."

I think he would have stayed where he was, but for fear of being found out. As for me, I felt sad, and I said to myself, "Behold your drunkards! they may have good intentions, but show them a bottle of wine, and they forget everything."

At last when it was nearly ten o'clock at night, we saw the fires of a bivouac on a gloomy ridge to the right of the village of Gauernitz. And an old castle was there too, in which lights were burning. Farther in the plain, numberless fires were flickering. The night was quite clear, for the heavy rains had dispersed the clouds. As we approached the bivouac, we were challenged with the cry, "Who goes there?" "France," answered the quartermaster. Then my heart began to beat more quickly; I thought that now I might see my old comrades again, if they were still living. Some of the men on guard came out of an old outhouse, not far from the village, to see who we were. They came quite close to us; their leader, a great old sub-lieutenant, with his arm in a sling under his coat, asked us where we came from, where we were going, and whether we had met with any Cossacks on the way. The quartermaster replied for us all. Then an officer told us that Souham's division had left Gauernitz that morning, and he told us to follow him and show him our marching tickets. This we did in silence, passing by the bivouack fires around which men were sleeping by hundreds, covered with dry mud; not one of them moved. We reached the outhouse, which was an old brickmaker's shed. The roof was very large, and shaped like an extinguisher, resting on pillars several feet high. Here a large store of wood had been placed. We found it quite comfortable, for a fire had been lighted, and the smell of burnt earth filled the room. There were many soldiers there, sleeping with their backs to the wall, and very lucky they thought themselves. Now and again flames would dart up and lighten the dark beams of the roof. Near the pillars one could see the gleam of many muskets. I still fancy I can see all these things, and feel a friendly warmth going through my limbs. I see my comrades with their clothes steaming, a few steps from the fire, waiting patiently till the officer had finished reading their tickets by the ruddy light. Only one old soldier was awake. He was sitting cross-legged, with a boot in his lap, which he was mending with a needle and some thread. I was the first to receive back my marching ticket from the officer. He told me that I should have to rejoin

my regiment to-morrow near Torgau, about six miles off. Then the old veteran, who had been looking at me, put his hand to the ground to show me there was room. I sat down on the floor beside him, and opened my knapsack, and put on a fresh pair of socks, and a pair of new shoes, which I had received at Leipsic; after which I felt much better. Then the veteran said to me, "You are about to rejoin?"

I replied, "Yes, the 6th Regiment at Torgau."

He asked where I came from, and I told him from the hospital at Leipsic.

"We can see that," said he, "you are as fat as a friar; you have been fed on fowls and chickens, while we have been eating lean cows."

I looked at my sleeping companions, and saw that he was right. The poor conscripts were nothing but skin and bone, their faces were yellow, and lined and scarred like veterans. One would have thought that they could never have held out a day longer. Presently the old soldier resumed, and asked me if I had been wounded. I told him that I had at Lutzen. He pursed up his mouth and said, "Four months in hospital? what good fortune! As for me, I have now come from Spain. I expected to find the German troops as they used to be in 1809, nothing better than mere sheep, but they have become very different, and are worse than guerillas. Things are going badly, badly!"

Although he said this to me, yet he was really talking to himself in a low voice, drawing out his threads like a shoemaker the while, and tightening his lips. Occasionally he tried on his shoe, to see if the patch was properly put on, and at last he put his work materials into his knapsack, and the shoe on his foot, and lay down with his head on a bundle of straw. I was so tired that it was difficult to go to sleep, but eventually I dropped into a sound slumber. The next day I went off again with Poitevin and three other soldiers of our division. First we reached the road that goes by the River Elbe. It was wet weather, and as the wind swept across the river, the spray of the water was thrown across the road. We had been marching for more than an hour, when all at once the quartermaster cried out, "Attention!" He stopped and lifted his nose in the air like a dog that scents something from afar. Although we listened we could hear nothing, because of the noise of the waves and the river, and of wind in the trees, but Poitevin was more practised than we were. Pointing to a wood at the right,

he said, " They are firing down there. The enemy may be in this direction, so we will try and keep out of the open. Our best plan is to go into the wood and pursue our way with prudence. If the Prussians or the Russians are there, we shall be able to retreat before they see us; if they are Frenchmen, we shall be able to advance in safety."

We all felt the quartermaster's advice was sound, and in my heart I could not help admiring the cunning of the old drunkard. We left the road and entered the wood, Poitevin in front and we behind with our muskets ready to fire. We proceeded very cautiously, frequently stopping to listen. We could hear the firing now, as it came nearer. The shots followed each other rapidly and echoed in the valley. Then Poitevin said, " They are sharpshooters watching a body of cavalry, who do not return the fire." He was quite right, for a few minutes afterwards we saw in the trees a regiment of French infantry making their way amongst the bushes, and quite a long way off on the grey plain, bands of Cossacks marching from one village to another. Some sharpshooters placed on the edge of the wood were firing at them, but they were almost out of range. Then old Poitevin said to me with a smile, " Come along, conscript, you are at home now." He must have had wonderful eyes to read the number of our regiment at so great a distance. For my part, although I looked as sharply as I could, I could see nothing but ragged human beings, very haggard, with sharp noses and glaring eyes, and ears that seemed to stand from their heads, so sunken were their cheeks; their overcoats were too big by half, and looked like cloaks from the number of folds in which they hung about them. As to the mud, I will say nothing about that, it was too fearful. That day I learnt why the Germans had seemed so glad after our victory at Dresden. We went down towards some little tents around which a few horses were browsing on the thin grass. There I saw Colonel Lorain stationed on the left bank of the Elbe with the third battalion. He was a thin, tall man with a tawny moustache, and by no means a gentle look. He knitted his brows when he saw us, and I presented him my marching ticket; he briefly said, " Join your company." I walked on, thinking on the way that I recognised some men of the 4th, but since Lutzen many of the companies had got mixed together, and regiments too, and even divisions had been amalgamated, so that when I reached the place where the grenadiers were in camp, I could not recognise anybody. When they saw me coming they looked at me askance, as though they would say,

"Is this man come to claim a share of our soup? Wait a little and let us see what he brings to help make it." I felt almost ashamed to ask where my company was posted, but just then a bony lank veteran, with a long nose, hooked like an eagle's beak, and broad shoulders, from which his overcoat hung loosely down, lifted his head and examined me attentively. Then he said in quite a calm voice, "Why, Joseph, is it you? I thought you had been dead and buried four months ago."

Immediately I recognised my poor friend Zebedee. The sight of my face appeared to soften him, but without rising, he pressed my hand, and cried out, "Klipfel, here is Joseph."

Another soldier, sitting near a soup kettle, turned his head, and remarked, "It is you, Joseph? Then you are not dead."

That was all the welcome I received. Misery makes people so selfish, they think of nothing but their own skins. For all that, Zebedee was a good fellow. He told me to sit down by his soup kettle. At the same time he gave those around him one of those looks which always induce respect. He handed me his spoon, which he had fastened in one of the large buttonholes of his coat. But with many thanks I declined, for I had had the prudence the day before to go to a pork-butcher's shop at Riesa and to purchase a dozen small sausages, with a good loaf of bread, and a bottle of brandy. As I opened my knapsack and drew out the sausages, two of which I offered to Zebedee, the tears came into his eyes. I also intended to offer the other soldiers some, but guessing this, Zebedee put his hand on my arm, and remarked, "What is good to eat is good to keep."

Then we withdrew from the circle and ate together and drank. The others said nothing, but looked at us out of the corners of their eyes. Klipfel, who smelt the fragrant garlic, turned his head, and cried, "Come, Joseph, come and eat at our kettle; hang it all, comrades once, comrades always."

"All very fine," said Zebedee, "the best comrades for me are sausages; one always finds them ready when one wants them."

And then he shut up my knapsack, and said, "Take care of it, Joseph, it is more than a month since I had such a meal as this."

An hour afterwards the recall was beaten. The sharpshooters came back, and amongst them was Sergeant Pinto, who at once recognised me. "Aha," said he, "then you got clear out of it; how glad I am! But you have come at a bad time. This is a bad war, a very bad war;" and he continued to shake his head.

The officers mounted their horses, and we set out again. The Cossacks retreated. We marched in open order, and Zebedee was next to me. Of course, as we marched along, he told me all that had taken place since Lutzen. First there had been the great victories of Bautzen and Wurtzen; then forced marches to reach the retreating enemy, and then great joy at going towards Berlin. Then came the truce, during which the French were billeted in small towns; then the arrival of the veteran soldiers from Spain, terrible fellows, accustomed to robbery, who taught the conscripts how to live upon the peasantry. Unfortunately, at the end of this truce, everybody turned against us. The people hated us, they cut the bridges behind us, they gave intelligence to the Prussians, the Russians, and the rest of our enemies concerning all our movements, and every time we were in a difficulty they tried to make things worse for us. The heavy rains were the culminating point to our troubles. On the day of the Battle of Dresden, the rain fell in such torrents that the emperor's hat hung down upon his shoulders, but when you are victorious, you laugh at things like that, you seem to feel warm and manage to get a change of clothes. It is far worse when you are beaten, and have to run through the mud with hussars and dragoons and all sorts of other people after you, and when you don't know if you see a distant light at night whether it would be safer to advance or to stay and perish with the cold. Zebedee told me all these things, and many others. He told me that after the Battle of Dresden, General Vandamme, who was appointed to cut off the retreat of the Austrians, had gone on in the direction of Kulm, and in his extreme zeal had got caught in a kind of funnel. Those we had beaten the day before now fell upon him in front and rear, right and left, so that he and several other generals had been taken prisoners, and his army corps had been destroyed. Two days before, on 26th August, a similar thing had happened to our division, and to the 5th, 6th, and 11th Corps on the heights of Lowenberg. It was intended to crush the Prussians on that side, but through a false movement by Marshal Macdonald, the enemy had suddenly surprised us in a ravine with our guns in the mud, our cavalry in disorder, and our infantry unable to fire on account of the terrible rain. We had been obliged to resort to the bayonet, and the 3rd Battalion had been driven by the charge of the Prussians into the River Katzbach. There Zebedee had received two blows on the head from the stock of a Prussian grenadier's musket. The current of the river swept him away,

while he was clinging to Captain Arnold, and they would both have been lost if the captain had not been able, by good fortune, in the darkness of the night, to cling hold of the branch of a tree on the opposite bank, and so to get out of the water. He told me that all that night, in spite of the blood that kept running from his wound, he walked to the village of Goldberg, half dead with hunger and fatigue and pain. A carpenter had pity on him, and kindly gave him bread and onions and water. He told me afterwards that next day the whole division, followed by the other corps, marched separately across the country without receiving any orders, because the generals and principal officers had fled as far as they could for fear of being made prisoners. He added that fifty light cavalry men might have picked off all these troops one after another, but fortunately Blücher had not been able to cross the flooded river, so that finally they had rallied at Wolda, where the drummers of all the different corps beat the march of their different regiments at the corners of the village. By this means every man had disentangled himself from the general confusion, and marched towards his own drummer.

Many of the superior officers were quite surprised when they reached Buntzlau, a little farther on, to discover that they still had any regiment to lead. All this my comrade told me, and he added that we must have no confidence in our allies, who would suddenly fall on our flank, some time or another. He also told me that Marshal Oudinot and Marshal Ney had been beaten, the one at Gross Beeren, and the other at Dennewitz. It was a terrible state of things, for in these retreats many of the conscripts died of exhaustion and disease, and of misery of all kinds. The veterans of the former campaigns in Germany and Spain were the only men fit to sustain such terrible fatigue. In fact, everything seemed to be against us—the country, the weather, and our own generals, who were tired of everything. Some of them were dukes and princes, and they got weary of always being in the mud instead of sitting in rich armchairs, and others, like Vandamme, wanted to hurry and become marshals by some striking exploit, but we, poor wretches, had nothing to gain, except, perhaps, chills or lameness for the rest of our days. We, the sons of the workmen and labourers, who fought to abolish the old nobility, now found ourselves fighting to create a new one. I realised then that the poorest and most unfortunate men are not always the most stupid, and that through suffering one gets to understand the meaning of truth;

but I said little, I only prayed to God to give me strength and courage to sustain me in the misery that was being prepared for us all. We were then between three armies which were waiting to unite in order to crush us by a single blow; that on the north was commanded by Bernadotte, that in Silesia was lead by Blücher, while the army of Bohemia was commanded by Schwartzenberg. Sometimes we thought we were going to pass the Elbe in order to fall on the Prussians and the Swedes; sometimes again we thought we were going to advance against the Austrians in the direction of the mountains, as we had often done in Italy and elsewhere, but our enemies had at least learnt the lessons we had taught them, and whenever we approached them, they seemed to retire before us. They were especially suspicious of the emperor, who could not be at the same time in Silesia and Bohemia, and this caused endless marchings. What the troops most ardently desired was to fight, for through marching and sleeping in the mud and living on half rations, they were tired of life, and everyone thought, "We wish it would end one way or the other. It is too much as it is; it cannot last."

As for me, I was tired of the life after a few days. I felt as though my legs were pressing into my ribs, and my flesh fell away visibly. Every night we had to be on guard against a rascal named Thielmann, who was rousing the peasantry against us. He shadowed us from village to village, on the heights, on the highways, and in the barns; his army consisted of all who hated us, and he had no lack of recruits. It was about this time also that Bavaria, Baden, and Wurtemburg declared against us, so that we had all Europe to contend with. At last we had the gratification of observing that the army was uniting as for a battle. Instead of meeting with Platow, the general of the Cossacks, or the irregular troops of Thielmann in the villages, we found hussars, dragoons, and other troops from Spain, and artillery and engineer trains, all on the march. The rain still fell in torrents, and those who could not drag themselves any farther sat down at the foot of the trees and gave themselves up to their unhappy fate.

On the 11th October we bivouacked near Lousig; on the 13th near Grafenheinigen; on the 13th we passed the river Mulda, and saw a regiment defile across the bridge. They announced the passage of the emperor, but we advanced with Souham's corps, and Dombrowska's division. In the rare moments when the rain ceased to fall, and a gleam of autumnal sunshine

pierced the clouds, the whole army could be seen in motion. The cavalry and infantry were advancing on both sides of Leipsic. On the farther side of the River Mulda we could see the gleaming bayonets of the Austrians; the Prussians and Russians were not yet in view. No doubt they were coming up from another direction. On the 14th our regiment was once more detached, in order to see what was going on in the town of Aaken. We found the enemy there. He received us with cannon balls, and we stayed there all night, being unable to light a single fire because of the rain. Next day we went on by forced marches to join our division. I did not know, but everybody said there was going to be a battle. Sergeant Pinto said he could scent the emperor in the air. For myself, I could smell nothing; but I saw that we were marching on Leipsic, and I thought if we could only have a battle, provided I did not get wounded, perhaps I should see Catherine again. The weather had cleared up a little the next night, and thousands of stars twinkled in the sky as we marched on. At ten o'clock in the morning, near a little village, we halted to rest, and then we all heard something like thunder in the air, and the colonel, sitting on his horse, listened intently. Sergeant Pinto said the battle had begun. Almost at the same time the colonel waved his sword and cried "Forward." Then we set off running with knapsacks, cartouch pouches, and muskets, all bumping about together and the mud flying in all directions. In about half an hour's time we saw, some thousand yards in front of the regiment, a column which was so long it really seemed to have no end. There were waggons and cannons, infantry and cavalry; behind us on the main road others were coming up, and all at a gallop. Even across the fields whole regiments were running. At the extreme end of the road we could see the steeples of the churches of St. Nicholas and St. Thomas of Leipsic standing against the sky, while to the right and left at each side of the town thick mists were rising with flashes of fire amongst them. The boom of the cannon got louder. We were still more than a league from the city, yet we had to speak quite loudly to each other, and the men looked on with pale faces, and seemed to say, "This is something like a battle."

Sergeant Pinto shouted, "Why, it is hotter than at Eylau."

He did not laugh, nor did I, nor Zebedee, nor any of the others; but we ran forward all the same, and the officers kept on repeating, "Forward, forward!"

And this is just how men lose their heads. It is true, the

love of our country was in us, but the desire for fighting was stronger still. About eleven o'clock we came in full sight of the battlefield, a league from Leipsic. We saw the steeples of the town covered with people, and the old ramparts, too, where I had so often walked, thinking of Catherine. Twelve or fifteen hundred yards in front of us were placed two regiments of Red Lancers; and a little to the left of these were regiments of mounted infantry, in the meadows joining the River Partha. Between these regiments the convoys which were coming up from Duben were defiling. Farther on, on a little ridge, were posted Souham's division, and several others, with their backs to the town. Cannon, with horses harnessed to them, and powder waggons with artillerymen and train soldiers on horseback, were all ready to set off. Quite at the back, on a hill around one of the old country farms, with flat roofs and large outhouses so common in this part of the country, could be seen the officers of the staff. It was the army of reserve commanded by Marshal Ney; its left wing communicating with Marmont, was posted on the road to Halle; its right wing, with the grand army, was commanded by the emperor himself, so that our troops may be described as forming a large circle around Leipsic; and the enemy, coming from all quarters at once, endeavoured to join their armies so as to make a still larger circle around us, and to shut us up in the town like rats in a trap. In the meantime, three terrible battles were going on at once. One against the Austrians and Russians at Wauchau, another against the Prussians at Mockern, and the third on the road to Lutzen to defend the bridge of Lindenau, which was being hotly attacked. I do not think I could tell you why I give all these particulars, but perhaps everybody ought to tell what he has seen himself, and in this way the world will get to know the truth.

## CHAPTER XVIII

Our regiment began to descend the hill towards Leipsic, to join our division, when we saw an officer of the staff cross the great field below, galloping at top speed. In a moment he was near us. The colonel hastened to meet him; they exchanged a few words, and then the officer rode back. Hundreds of others were crossing the plain in the same way, giving orders. At last the colonel moved in the direction of a wood in the rear, which skirts the road to Duben for about half a league. It was a beech forest, but there were also birches and oak trees there. When we came to the borders of the wood, we were told to look to our muskets, and the regiment was opened out in skirmishing order among the trees. We were drawn up twenty-five yards from each other, and in this way we advanced, keeping our eyes open, as you may imagine. Almost every minute Sergeant Pinto kept saying, "Put yourselves under cover!" There was really no need to remind us so often, for we were quite on the alert, and made haste to get some tree to look round at our ease before going farther. I could not help thinking what peaceable people may be exposed to in their lives. After we had been moving on in this way for about ten minutes, and as no enemy appeared, we began to grow confident. But soon a gun went off, and then another, and five or six more on all sides along our lines. A moment after I saw my left-hand man fall, trying to clutch a tree as he went down. That put me on my guard. I looked on the other side, and what should I see, fifty or sixty yards away, but an old Prussian soldier with his hat with the little chain, his elbow squared up, and his long grey moustache resting on the barrel of his gun, taking aim at me with one eye shut. As quick as thought I dropped my head. At that very second I heard a shot, and something whistled over my head. I had my brush and comb and handkerchiefs in my hat, and all were broken by this rascal's bullet. I felt cold all over.

"You just had a fine escape," said Sergeant Pinto, as he ran off.

Not caring to remain alone in such a spot, I followed him quickly enough. Lieutenant Bretonville, with sword under his arm, shouted "Forward," and farther on to the right the firing continued. We had now reached a clearing in the wood. Five or six large oak trees had been cut down, and there was a little

pond covered with long grass, and not a single tree to shelter us. In spite of that, several were advancing boldly when the sergeant said to us: "Stop, the Prussians are sure to be in ambush hereabouts; let us be watchful."

He had scarcely said this when a dozen bullets whistled through the branches, and we heard the muskets going off. Then we saw a group of Prussians making the best of their way into the thicket farther on. "They are gone now; forward!" shouted Sergeant Pinto. The musket-ball through my hat had aroused my wits, and I seemed to be able to see through the trees; so just as the sergeant was going to cross the open space, I held him back by the arm, and showed him the barrel of a musket appearing beneath a bush on the opposite side of the swamp, not many paces before us. Our comrades saw it also, and the sergeant said in a low voice, "Bertha, stay here; don't lose sight of him, and the rest of us will go and turn their flank."

They immediately went to the right and left, and I brought my gun to the shoulder, and waited behind the tree, like a sportsman watching a deer. In a few minutes the Prussian, hearing nothing, quickly arose. He was quite a young lad, with a light moustache and a tall, slim figure. I could have brought him down easily, but the idea of killing a man who was thus exposed, moved me so that I trembled all over. All at once he saw me, and jumped aside, then I fired, and breathed more freely on seeing him bound away like a deer through the shrubs. Sergeant Pinto, Zebedee, Klipfel, and others came running up, and a hundred yards further on we found the young Prussian on the ground, covered with blood. He looked at us wildly, and lifted his arm, as if to ward us off. The sergeant said to him quite cheerfully, "Come, come, don't be afraid, you have had quite enough," and nobody liked killing him; but Klipfel took a handsome pipe which was in his pocket, and said, "I have wanted a pipe for a long time, and here is one at last."

Then Sergeant Pinto became quite angry, and said, "Klipfel, put down that pipe directly; it is all very well for the Cossacks to rob the wounded, but the French soldiers understand honour."

Klipfel threw down the pipe, and we went away without turning our heads. We soon came to the end of the wood, which stopped rather more than half way up the hill; some thick bushes ran up farther to the top, and behind these the Prussians whom we had pursued were hidden. We could see them rising up to shoot at us, and then they crouched down

again. We might have stood quietly where we were, as our orders were to occupy the wood, and we had nothing to do with those bushes. Behind the trees the Prussian bullets would not have hurt us. We could hear the terrible battle proceeding on the other side of the ridge. Cannon after cannon was fired, and sometimes a whole volley came like thunder. This was an additional reason for staying where we were, but our officers had come together, and decided that the bushes formed part of the wood, and that we must drive the Prussians over the ridge. By this decision many people lost their lives in that place. We were ordered to drive back the enemy's skirmishers, and as they fired upon us when we approached, and then crouched down, we all began to run in order to stop them from reloading. Our officers, full of zeal, also ran. We thought that at the top of the road the bushes would end, and that we could then shoot the Prussians down by dozens; but just as we got to the top, quite out of breath, Sergeant Pinto cried out, "Look! the Hussars."

I looked up and saw them coming up the road, growing larger as they approached. They seemed to be coming upon us like a whirlwind. Then I turned round, and began rushing towards the wood, bounding along many feet at a time, in spite of my fatigue and weapons. Before me I saw Sergeant Pinto, Zebedee, and the rest. They were making all the haste they could with good purpose. Behind us the Hussars made such an uproar that our very hair stood on end. The officers were shouting to them in German. We could hear the breath of the horses, and the clattering of the scabbards against the men's boots, and the very earth shook. I took the shortest cut to the back of the wood, and thought I was all right, but when I approached one of the shrubs, I came to a large trench where the peasants were digging clay for building. It was more than twenty feet wide and forty or fifty feet long. The rain which had been falling so much had made the sides very slippery. I heard the horses snorting nearer and nearer, and my heart almost stood still with fright. I thought of nothing, but began to run, and tumbled over into the hollow with my greatcoat and cartouch box flying about my head. Another soldier of my company was there trying to get out; he also had tried to leap over the trench. The first of the Hussars, a man with a red face, aimed his sword at my poor comrade's head, swearing like a madman as he stood in his stirrups to finish him off; so I just thrust my bayonet into his side with all my strength. At the same moment another Hussar cut me on the shoulder in a way that would have killed me but

for my large woollen epaulette. Then he was going to transfix me with his weapon, but luckily for me a bullet from above hit him in the head. I looked and saw one of our men standing with the clay up to his knees. He had heard the neighing of the horses, and the swearing of the Hussars, and had come to the side of the trench to see what was happening. He began with a laugh, and said, "Well, my comrade, I was none too soon."

I really had not strength to answer him, but I trembled like a leaf. He unfixed his bayonet, and held his musket towards me, to help me out. Then I shook him by the hand, and told him he had saved me, and asked his name. He replied that his name was Jean Pierre Vincent. Many a time I have thought that if I should happen to meet this man, it would make me very happy to do him a service. But two days afterwards the second battle of Leipsic was fought; then came the retreat of Hanhau, and I never set eyes on him again. Sergeant Pinto and Zebedee came up soon afterwards, and the latter said, "We have been in luck again this time, Joseph; we are the last Phalsbourg men in the regiment now. Klipfel has been just cut to pieces by the Hussars." I turned and asked if he had seen it. He replied, "Yes; he received more than twenty sabre cuts, and cried out, 'Zebedee! Zebedee!' and then a moment afterwards he died. It is a dreadful thing to hear one of your old friends appealing to you for help, and to be unable to render it; but there were too many of them; they quite surrounded him."

This made us very melancholy, and we thought of our homes once more. I wondered how Klipfel's grandmother would look when she got the news. And, of course, this made me think of Catherine too. From the time of the charge of the Hussars until nightfall, the regiment remained in the same position, to skirmish against the Prussians. We managed to prevent them from occupying the wood, but they prevented us from occupying the ridge. The next day we discovered the reason for this. The ridge overlooked the whole course of the River Partha, and the great firing we heard came from Dombrowska's division, which was attacking the left wing of the Prussians in order to reinforce General Marmont at Mockern. Twenty thousand Frenchmen posted above a ravine held in check 80,000 men under Blücher, and in the vicinity of Wauchau, 115,000 French were striving against 200,000 Austrians and Prussians. More than 1500 cannon were booming at once. Our little firing on the right of Witterich was like the humming of a bee in the midst

of a tempest. Sometimes we felt impelled to leave off firing on both sides, in order to listen. It seemed frightful, and almost supernatural. The air was filled with smoke and powder; the earth trembled beneath our feet, and even veterans like Pinto said they had never seen anything like it before. About six o'clock a staff officer appeared on the ridge to our left with an order to Colonel Lorain, and the retreat was sounded. The regiment had lost sixty men in the charge of the Prussian Hussars and the firing that accompanied it. It was night when we marched from the forest, and on the banks of the Partha amid many waggons and military trains of all kinds, bodies of troops in retreat, detachments, and carts full of wounded soldiers crossing the two bridges, we were compelled to wait more than two hours before our turn came. The sky was dark, and the cannon could still be heard in the distance, but the three battles were really over. We heard it said that we had beaten the Austrians and Prussians at Wauchau, on the other side of Leipsic; but those who returned from Mockern were very downhearted, and nobody shouted, "Vive l'Empereur!" as they did after a victory. As soon as we reached the further bank of the river, the regiment went down the road by its side for about half a league to the village of Schonfelt. It was a wet night, and we marched with heavy steps, our eyes heavy with sleep, our muskets bumping heavily on our shoulders, and our weary heads bent. Behind us a great procession of guns, baggage, waggons, and troops retreating from Mockern, continued its ceaseless rumbling, and now and again the cry of the train soldiers, and the artillery drivers trying to clear a way for themselves, rose above all the noise. But these sounds grew weaker, and at last we reached a churchyard, where we were ordered to halt and pile up our muskets. Then for the first time I lifted my head, and in the light of the moon I recognised Schonfelt. How many times had I been there with Zimmer, eating good food and drinking white wine in the little inn of the "Golden Sheaf" under the charge of Father Hurter, when the air was warmed with sunshine, and everything was green and bright around us. Alas! those times were now past! The sentries were posted, and some of the men went into the village to seek food and wood. As for me, I sat with my back against the churchyard wall, and fell asleep. About three o'clock in the morning Zebedee woke me up. "Joseph," said he, "come and warm yourself. If you stay there, you have a good chance of catching the fever."

So I rose, quite dizzy with pain and fatigue. A fine rain was drizzling down. Zebedee drew me near the fire, which was burning despite the rain. There was not very much heat, but it was something to look at, and, after my comrade had given me something to drink, I felt a little less cold. I looked across at the bivouac fires burning on the farther side of the Partha. "The Prussians are making themselves warm," said Zebedee, "for they are in our wood now."

My teeth were chattering with cold, and these words made us both melancholy. A few minutes afterwards Zebedee said to me, "Joseph, do you remember how he wore a black ribbon on his hat on the day of the conscription? Do you remember his calling out, 'We are all condemned to death, like those men in Russia. I will have a black ribbon, and will wear my own mourning.' And how his little brother cried, 'No, Jacob, I won't have you do it;' but Klipfel put on his black ribbon all the same. Why, he must have seen the Hussars in a dream!"

As Zebedee went on talking, all these things came back to me, and I also saw that rascal Pinacle in the square in front of the town hall crying out to me while he waved a black ribbon over his head. I remembered his words, which were, "Now, lame fellow, you must have a fine ribbon, the ribbon of those who win; come on." This thought, and the shocking cold which penetrated my very bones, caused me to shiver. I felt sure that I should never live through it, and that Pinacle was quite right in his prediction. I thought of Catherine, Aunt Grethel, and good Father Goulden, and I cursed all those who had forced me to come to all this tribulation. About four o'clock in the morning, when the first flash of dawn began to make the sky look pale, some provisions arrived, and we received brandy, bread, and meat. The rain had stopped. We made our soup where we sat, but nothing could warm me; I was in a burning fever. I felt cold without, and like fire within. I do not think there was a single man in the regiment but felt thus. Three-quarters of us were suffering and perishing in a similar manner. For quite a month, men who could march no farther had been sitting on the ground weeping, and, like little children, calling their mothers to help them. It was a sad and heartrending sight. Hunger, forced marches, rainy weather, caused them to think they would never see their country again, or those whom they loved. All these things had brought on this illness. Fortunately, their parents could not see their children dying on the highway. It would have been too dreadful if they had, for then they would have

thought there was no more mercy on earth or in heaven. As the day proceeded, we could see to the left, on the farther side of the river and a great ravine covered with willows and other trees, burnt villages, heaps of dead, overturned cannon, and waggons, and the ruined fields as far as the eye could reach along the road to Hall Dolitzch and Lindenthal: it was really worse than at Lutzen. We could see the Prussians moving in that direction by thousands, towards the field of battle. They were about to unite with the Austrians and Russians, and thus to make a great circle around us. There was nothing to stop them, especially as Bernadotte and the Russian general Beningsen, who had stayed behind, were coming up with 120,000 fresh soldiers. Our army, after having fought three battles in one day, and being reduced to 130,000 fighting men, was to be enclosed in a circle of 300,000 bayonets, besides 50,000 cavalry and 1200 guns. From Schonfelt the regiment marched to Kohlgarten, to join the division. On the whole of the way we saw vast numbers of wounded passing slowly along. All the carts in the country had been requisitioned for their service, and between them marched thousands of unfortunate wounded with arms in slings, heads bandaged, pale, emaciated, and half dead. All those who dragged themselves along did so in preference to going in the waggons, and tried to reach the hospitals on foot. We had the greatest difficulty in the world to get through this obstruction. Suddenly, when we approached Kohlgarten, a number of Hussars, galloping at full speed with their pistols ready, drove the crowd to right and left into the fields. With a loud voice they cried, "The emperor! the emperor!"

Immediately the regiment drew up at one side of the road to present arms, and soon afterwards mounted grenadiers of the guards, men like giants, with huge boots and tall bearskins that reached to their shoulders, leaving only their eyes, noses and moustaches visible, came galloping by, their swords held close to their sides. Everybody was rejoiced to call out, These fellows are on our side, and they are terrible fighters.

Directly after they were gone the staff appeared. Imagine the scene: between 150 and 250 generals, marshals, and staff officers, mounted on thoroughbred horses, and so covered with gold lace and decorations that one could hardly see the colour of their uniforms; some of them tall and thin, with haughty features, and others short and thick, with ruddy faces; others younger, sitting upright on their horses like statues, with flash-

ing eyes and noses like eagles' beaks. It was magnificent, and yet fearful. What struck me most among all these officers who had made Europe tremble for the past twenty years, was the appearance of Napoleon himself, in his old hat and grey overcoat. I think I see him still, as he passed me with his large firm set jaw and his massive head sunk in his shoulders. Everybody cried, " Vive l'Empereur! "

But he said not a word; he noticed us no more than the fine rain drizzling through the air. He was looking with frowning brows at the Prussian army defiling along the Partha to join the Austrians. Just as I beheld him on that day does his image remain on my mind. The battalion had resumed its march for about a quarter of an hour, when Zebedee said, " Joseph, did you see him? "

I replied, " Yes, I saw him plainly, and all my life I shall remember him."

" Very strange," said my companion, " I should have said he was not in a good humour. At Wurtzen, when the battle was over, he seemed pleased to hear us cry, ' Vive l'Empereur,' and the generals smiled also. To-day they all look black as thunder, and yet we were told this morning that we had gained another victory on the other side of Leipsic."

Many others thought the same thing, though they said nothing, and we began to feel uncomfortable. We found the regiment bivouacked beyond Kohlgarten; and we took up a position on the right of the road, on a hill. In every direction we could see the innumerable fires of the armies with their smoke rolling upwards to heaven. The drizzling rain still fell, and the men sat on their knapsacks in front of the fires, their arms crossed and looking very thoughtful. The officers gathered into groups. On all sides we could hear men saying that such a war had never been known; that it was a war of extermination; that the enemy did not mind being beaten, and all he cared about was to kill more of our men, knowing that at the last he would have four or five times as many as we had, so that he would be master in the end. It was also said that the emperor had won the battle at Wachau against the Russians and Austrians, but that this was useless, as the others had not retreated, and were expecting great reinforcements. In the direction of Mockern it was obvious that we had lost the day, in spite of the fine defence Marmont made; we had simply been crushed by superior numbers. During the day we had had one real advantage, and one only, and that was, we maintained our lines

of retreat upon Erfurt, for the enemy had not been able to take the bridges on the Elster and the Pleisse. The whole army, from private up to field-marshal, thought we ought to retreat as quickly as we could, and that our position was dangerous. Unfortunately, the emperor thought otherwise, and we had to remain. During the whole of the 17th we stayed in our position without firing a shot. Some talked about the arrival of General Reynier with 16,000 Saxons, but as the Bavarians had deserted us, we had begun to place little confidence in our allies. In the evening we were told that the army of the north was beginning to show itself on the plains of Breitenfeld. That made 60,000 more men for the enemy. I can still hear the curses that were uttered against Bernadotte, the cries of indignation from those who knew him as a simple officer in the time of the republic. "He owed everything to us," they said, "we made him a king by shedding our blood, and now he is going to give the finishing blow to our destruction." That night there was a general retreat. Our army got closer round Leipsic, and all was quiet, but that did not prevent us from thinking. On the contrary, every one said to himself in silence, "What will be our fate to-morrow? Shall I see the moon rise among the mists as I see it now? Will the stars in the heavens above that now are shining, still be shining there for me?"

And when we looked on the large circle of fires that extended all around us to a distance of eighteen miles, we thought to ourselves, "Truly, the whole world is against us; all the nations demand our extermination. They have had enough of our glory."

And then came the thought that after all we had the honour of being Frenchmen, and that it was our duty to conquer or to die.

## CHAPTER XIX

Thoughts like these filled my mind as the sun arose. Not a sound was yet heard; then Zebedee said to me, "What good fortune it would be if the enemy should not have the pluck to attack us."

The officers began talking amongst themselves of a truce, but about nine o'clock our outposts came hurrying in in order to say that the enemy was moving along the whole length of the line, and immediately the cannon began to roar on our right along the Elster. We were speedily under arms, and marched over fields in the direction of the Partha to reach Schoenfeld. That was the actual beginning of the battle. On hills in front of us, two or three divisions, with batteries between them, and flanked by cavalry, were waiting for the enemy. Right away beyond the bayonet tops we could see the Prussians, the Russians and the Swedes advancing in solid columns, apparently without end. About a quarter of an hour later we stood in line between two hills and in front of us we beheld five or six thousand Prussians crossing the river, and shouting, "Fatherland, fatherland!" It was like the tumultuous gathering of flocks of crows preparing for their flight to the north. At this moment firing began on both sides of the river, and the roar of cannon was heard. The valley of the Partha was filled with smoke; the Prussians were already upon us almost before we were aware of it, with furious eyes, set mouths, and ferocious looks. Then we raised the cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" and rushed upon the enemy. The struggle was appalling; in two or three seconds thousands of bayonets were crossing each other, men advanced, retreated, fired at each other point blank, killed each other with the butts of their muskets, and all ranks were mingled together. The wounded and dead were trampled on, and the great guns thundered over all. The smoke hung over the dark water between the hills; this, with the whistling of the bullets and the crackling sound of the firing, made the valley seem like a very furnace, into whose fiery jaws our men fell to be destroyed like logs of wood. As for us, it was nothing but despair that impelled us to go on. We wanted to revenge ourselves before we died. With the Prussians it was the pride of saying, "We shall

beat Napoleon this time." But those Prussians are the most conceited of men; their victories at Gross-Beeren and at Katzbach had turned their heads; but what a number of them remained in the river! Three times they crossed the river and rushed on us in countless numbers. We were obliged to yield, and what shouting on their side was then raised! One would have thought that they wanted to devour us. They are a hateful race of men; their officers lifted their swords above the forest of bayonets, and kept on shouting, "Forward, forward!" And forward they came like an avalanche, and nobody can deny the courage that they displayed. Our guns swept away whole lines of them, but still they advanced. At the top of the hill, however, we recovered ourselves, and attacked with such vigour that we drove them back into the river. We should have destroyed them utterly had it not been for one of their batteries planted in front of Mockern, which fired on our flank, and thus prevented us from going too far. And so things went on until two o'clock. Half our officers had fallen; Commander Gemeau was wounded, Colonel Lorain was killed, and all along the river side one saw nothing but heaps of dead, and wounded men trying to drag themselves out of the mêlée. Some of them, mad with rage and pain, were trying to fire one more shot or to make one more thrust with their bayonet at an enemy. Nothing had ever been seen like it before. In the river rows of dead bodies kept floating by, some with their faces upwards, others with their backs; they followed each other like logs of wood, and nobody took any notice of it at all. We were as indifferent as if the same thing could not happen to us. All this carnage took place along the banks of the Partha from Schoenfeld to Grossdorf. Eventually the Prussians and the Swedes marched along the river to turn our position from a higher point, and large masses of Russians came to take the place of the Prussians, who were not sorry to go and do what they could elsewhere. The Russians formed into two columns; they marched down the valley with shouldered arms, just as if they were at a review. Twice they charged us most valiantly, but without crying out and shouting like wild animals, as the Prussians did. Their cavalry tried to take the old bridge above Schoenfeld; the firing increased every moment. Whichever way we looked through the smoke, we could see nothing but enemies closing round us on all sides. As soon as we had driven back one column, others came up, and we had to begin the work over again. Towards three o'clock we were told that the Swedes and some Prussian cavalry had

crossed the river above Grossdorf, and were about to attack us in the rear, which certainly suited them much better than attacking us in front. Marshal Ney immediately changed his position, and moved back his right wing. Our division still remained at Schoenfeld; all the others fell back from the Partha, and deployed in the plain. The whole army now formed only a line round Leipsic. At three o'clock the Russians on the road behind Mockern prepared for their third attack. Our officers disposed their men ready to receive them. Then a kind of shudder ran through the army, for we learnt that at that moment 16,000 Saxons, and the whole of the Wurtemburg cavalry, in the very centre of our line, had gone over to the enemy. Before doing this, they had been guilty of the meanness of turning forty guns, which they took away with them, against their own comrades.

However, this act of treason, instead of discouraging us, only aroused our fury so that, if we could have had our way, we would have crossed the river in order to exterminate everybody before us. The Saxons say that they were defending their country. I say that is false; they might have left us on the way to Duben, there was nothing to stop them. They might have declared themselves before the battle, as the Bavarians did; they might have remained neutral, or they might have refused to take part in the battle; but I believe they betrayed us because they saw that the fortunes of war were going against us.

If they had thought that we were winning, they would have continued to be our very good friends, and would have claimed their share of the spoil, just as they did after Friedland and Jena. My opinion was shared by everybody else, and we shall consider the Saxons traitors for all time; for not only did they turn on their friends in the hour of misfortune, but they massacred them in order to secure a good reception from the other side. But God is just. The new allies of the Saxons held them in such contempt that after the battle they divided half their territory amongst them. We Frenchmen could thus afford to laugh at the gratitude the Prussians, Austrians, and Russians had shown to their Saxon allies. From that time until nightfall, it was no longer a civilised war, but a war of vengeance. It was our destiny to be overwhelmed by numbers, but our enemies had to pay very highly for their victory. As night was falling, while 2000 pieces of cannon were booming at the same time, we were attacked for the seventh time at Schoen-

feld. On one side the Russians, on the other side the Prussians, were driving us back into that village. We made a firm stand at every house and lane. The walls seemed to crumble beneath the cannon-balls; the roofs crashed in; the shouting had ceased, for we were pale and cold with rage. The officers had picked up muskets and cartridges, and began firing like private soldiers. When we were driven from the houses, we defended the gardens and the churchyard, where I had slept the night before. Very soon there were more dead bodies above ground than beneath it. Those who fell made no complaint; those who remained, stood together behind a wall or heap of stones, or a tomb, and every inch of ground we fought for cost somebody his life. It was night when Marshal Ney brought up a reinforcement; I do not know where it came from, but it proved to be the remainder of Rickard's and Souham's divisions. Then the remnants of our battalions rallied. We drove the Russians beyond the bridge, which had been riddled with shot. On this bridge six twelve-pounder guns were placed, and till seven o'clock the firing went on. The remainder of the battalion and a few other men supported the guns, and I remember that when they fired the light illuminated the space below the bridge, and there we saw men and horses as they were killed falling one on the other in a hideous mass beneath the dark arches. These flashes lasted only a moment at a time, but the passing vision was terrible. At half-past seven, large squadrons of cavalry began coming up on our left; we saw them galloping round two large squares that were slowly retiring. At last the order came for us to retreat. There were only two or three thousand men left at Schoenfeld with six guns. We returned to Kohlgarten without being pursued, and bivouacked at Rendnitz. Happily, Zebedee was still alive, and we marched side by side for a long time in silence, listening to the rolling of the guns, which still continued along the river side, and then he said to me, "Joseph, how is it we are still here when thousands of others all around us are dead? It seems as though we cannot die."

I could make no reply; then he cried, "What a battle! Did ever men fight before in such a manner? Truly, it seems impossible."

He was quite right; it had been a veritable battle of giants. From ten in the morning till seven at night, we had held our own against 360,000 men, and had not yielded an inch, and we were only 130,000 men. Nobody had ever seen fighting of this sort before. Heaven forbid that I should speak ill of the

Germans! They were fighting for the independence of their country, but I think they are wrong in celebrating the anniversary of the battle of Leipsic every year. If they remember that they were three to our one, there is very little for them to boast about. We passed over heaps of dead, and at every step we came across disabled guns, waggons overturned, and trees shattered by shot. Here it was that the division of the Young Guard and Mounted Grenadiers, led by Napoleon himself, had stopped the Swedes, who were advancing in order to occupy the space left when the Saxons betrayed us. Two or three old wooden houses which were still burning lighted up the scene. The Mounted Grenadiers were still at Rendnitz, but crowds of other troops were wandering to and fro in the streets. No food had been distributed, and everybody was wanting something to eat and drink. As we marched past the front of a large inn, we saw behind the wall of a yard two canteen women, pouring out drink as they stood in their carts. Behind them were hussars, dragoons, lancers, infantry, and guardsmen all mixed together, torn and ragged, with shakos and battered, plumeless helmets riddled with shot, and looking like starved people. Two or three dragoons standing on the wall near a pot filled with burning tar, with their arms crossed under long white cloaks, were covered with blood like butchers. Then Zebedee touched me on the elbow without speaking, and we went into the courtyard of the inn, while the rest pursued their way. It took us nearly a quarter of an hour to reach the cart. I held up a crown piece, and the woman, who was on her knees behind a barrel, took it and gave me a large glass of brandy, and a piece of white bread. I drank some, and then passed the glass to Zebedee, who emptied it. We had great difficulty in emerging from the crowd; men looked gloomily at one another, and made way for themselves by pushing with their elbows and shoulders. Looking at the men with their hard faces, sunken eyes, and wild looks, who had been walking over thousands of dead bodies, and were about to begin the same kind of work again to-morrow, one might well exclaim, "Every one for himself, and God for us all."

As we went up the village street, Zebedee asked me if I had any bread. I told him I had, and broke the bread in half, and gave him a piece. We ate it as we hurried along. We could still hear firing in the distance, and in about twenty minutes we caught up the rear of the column, recognising our regiment by Adjutant Vidal, who was walking near, we took our place

in the ranks; nobody had noticed our absence. The nearer we came to the town, the more guns and waggons we saw, all hastening to reach Leipsic.

About ten o'clock we crossed the suburb of Rendnitz. General Fournier took command of us, and told us to move towards the left. At midnight we reached the great promenades by the side of the Pleisse, and there halted under some leafless linden trees. Here we piled arms, and a long line of fires flickered through the misty air as far as the suburb of Ranstadt. As the flames flashed up, they showed groups of Polish Lancers, horses, cannon, baggage and ammunition waggons, and now and then we could see shadowy forms of sentinels, standing like statues. A clamour reached us from the town, which grew louder and louder, mingled with the rumbling of our waggons on the bridge of Lindenthal. It was the beginning of the retreat. Then each man put his knapsack down at the foot of a tree, stretched himself on the ground, head on arm, and in a quarter of an hour everybody was asleep.

## CHAPTER XX

I KNEW nothing of what took place until the day dawned. I presume that the baggage, the wounded men, and the prisoners, continued passing over the bridge. Suddenly a terrific explosion awakened us all, and every man of us jumped up on the instant. We thought it was an attack, but a cavalry officer came by and informed us that a powder waggon had exploded accidentally in the great avenue of Renstadt, beside the river. The lurid smoke still floated over the city as it slowly dispersed; the earth and the old houses seemed to shiver. Peace had returned. Some of the men lay down again wishing for more sleep; the daylight was growing; casting my eyes over the grey waters, I could already see our troops all along the five bridges of the Elster and Pleisse. These bridges are built in a line, and practically form only one. The very sight made one feel sad. The operation of crossing the rivers was, of course, a long one, and everybody could see that it would have been much better to throw several pontoons across the rivers in case of an attack by the enemy. Such a proceeding would have made the task very much easier, but somehow the emperor had forgotten to give orders, and without his orders nobody dared to do anything at all; not even the Marshal of France would have dared to assert that two bridges were better than one. This was the result of the terrible discipline of the emperor; it had reduced these old officers to machines; they obeyed like machines, and thought like machines; their only fear was that of displeasing their master. Myself, directly I saw how things were, I thought, "If they would only let us defile now, for, Heaven knows, we have had quite enough battles and slaughter; when once on the other side, we shall be on the good road to France, and I may even yet see Catherine, and Father Goulden, and Aunt Grethel once more.

These thoughts brought tears to my eyes, and I looked with envy at the thousands of artillery officers and train soldiers gradually passing out of sight, till they looked like so many ants, and at the huge bearskin caps of the Old Guard, who stood quite still on the farther side of the river on the Hill of Lindenthal, with their arms at rest. Suddenly Zebedee, who had been thinking

the same thoughts, said to me, " Joseph, if we were only in their place! "

About seven o'clock three waggons arrived bringing us cartridges and bread; it seemed very hard to us. It was now clear that we were destined to form part of the rearguard, and hungry as I was, I felt inclined to fling the bread against a wall. Soon after this, some Polish Lancers rode past us, towards a higher part of the river, and behind them were five or six generals. Amongst their number was Poniatowski, a man about fifty years old, rather tall, and very thin, and sad. He went on his way without looking at us.

General Fournier left his staff, and, coming towards us, cried out, " Left file! "

I felt as if my heart would break; I would have given my very life for a sou, but we had to step out again, and to turn our backs upon the bridge. At the end of the long promenade we came to a place called the Hinterthor. It was an old gate on the road to Caunewitz, and to the right and left of it were ancient ramparts, with houses standing behind them. They gave us as much cover as they could near this gate, which the engineers had firmly barricaded. Captain Vidal was now in command of the battalion, and we numbered 325 men. Some old, decayed pallisades had to serve us for entrenchments, and the enemy was advancing towards us along every road of approach. This time they were men with white waistcoats, shakos that came down low at the back of their necks, with a kind of metal plate in front, on which was the double eagle, the same that one sees on many coins.

Pinto knew them directly, and said, " Those are the Imperial troops; we have beaten them more than fifty times since 1793; all the same if the father of Marie Louise had had a little pluck, they would be helping us now."

Then we heard more sounds of guns firing. Blücher was attacking the suburb of Halle on the opposite side of the town. Soon after this, the firing extended to the right, for Bernadotte was attacking the suburb by the Kohlgarten gate, and at the same time the first shells of the Austrians fell amongst us. They came very quickly, passing over the Hinterthor, and they burst in the houses and streets as they fell.

About nine o'clock, the Austrians began the attack from the Caunewitz road. They fell upon us from every side. Still we held on till quite ten o'clock; then we were obliged to fall back behind the old ramparts, pursued through the breaches by them

under a cross-fire from the 29th and 14th of the line. These men were not quite such furious devils as the Prussians, but they displayed true courage, for at half-past ten they were mounted on the ramparts, and we shooting at them from all the windows round, without being able to drive them away. A few months before, things like this would have horrified me, but now I had seen much, and I was as hardened as a veteran; the death of one man or one hundred seemed to me to be of no consequence. Up to this moment everything went comparatively well, but now we had to consider the best way to get out of the houses. The enemy were in all the streets, and the only mode of retreating left to us was to clamber over the roofs. I well remember those awful moments. It seemed to me that we were all to be caught like rats in a trap. I went to a back window, and saw that it looked out on a courtyard, and this court had an entrance in front only. I quite expected that the Austrians, after doing all the harm they could to us, would kill us with their bayonets. With that thought I went back into the room. There were about ten of us. I saw Pinto against the wall, quite pale, with his arms hanging down. He had just been shot through the body, and was trying to say, "Defend yourselves, conscripts, defend yourselves. Let us show these men that we are better than they. Ah! the brigands!"

Underneath we could hear the blows like thunder against the door. Of course we kept on firing, but in a hopeless way, when suddenly there was a great sound as of the clattering of horses outside. Then the firing ceased, and, through the smoke, we saw four squadrons of Polish Lancers cutting their way like lions amongst the Austrians. Everybody gave way before them; the Imperial troops ran away, but the long bluish lances with their little red flames, moved faster than they did, and pierced their backs like arrows. These Lancers were Poles, and they were the best soldiers I ever saw; perhaps I am rather inclined to favour them, for they were our very good friends. They did not turn coat when the critical time came, but shed their blood for us to the last drop. And how have we repaid them? What have we done for their unhappy country? When I think of our ingratitude, my heart seems to break. The Poles had again come to our rescue. Seeing them so proud and brave, we rushed out, and at the Austrians with our bayonets, and drove them into their entrenchments. The victory of the moment was ours, but it was time to beat a retreat. Leipsic was already filled with the enemy. The gates of Halle, Grimma,

were taken, and the Peter gate been kindly surrendered to the foe by our friends of Baden, or the Saxons. Soldats, students, and citizens were firing at us from the windows. We had just time to reform, and get back to the great avenue by the side of the River Pleisse. Our friends the Lancers were waiting for us, and we marched behind them. The Austrians continued to press on us, so they charged them again to drive them back. These Poles are brave fellows, and fine horsemen. We were all full of admiration for them, especially at that moment. The division was reduced from 8000 to 1500, and we were now retreating before 50,000 of our foes, but from time to time we turned and replied to the fire of the Austrians. At last to our great joy we drew near to the bridge, but it was not very easy to reach it. All along the avenue thousands of men on foot or on horse rushed to get over. They came from all parts of the town, and the huge crowd formed a single mass, with heads close together, pressing slowly forward with sighs and cries, which could be heard like a distant murmur half a mile off, in spite of the firing. It was unfortunate for those who happened to be at the edges of the bridge. They fell over, and nobody paid any heed. In the middle, men and even horses were borne off their feet, there was no need to move, everybody was borne onwards without any exertion at all. But how were we to get to our destination? The enemy kept advancing on us; guns had been posted everywhere to sweep the approach to the bridge, and the principal streets near it. There were still some troops drawn up, in order to resist attacks, but the Russians, the Prussians, and the Austrians had guns too, and those who stayed last after having covered the retreat of all the rest, received the benefit of the shells and bullets.

About two or three hundred yards away from the bridge, the idea came to me to run and lose myself in the crowd, and thus be carried over to the other side. But just then Captain Vidal, Lieutenant Bretonville, and other old officers, shouted, "The first man who leaves the ranks will be shot dead."

I thought it was a dreadful position to be in, so near safety, but it was evident that I must stay where I was. All this took place between eleven and twelve o'clock. If I live to be a hundred years old, I shall never forget that moment; the firing was coming nearer, both to the right and left, cannon-balls began to shoot through the air, and in the direction of the suburb of Halle, the Prussians were seen pouring out pell-mell with our own soldiers. All around the bridge the most terrible

cries arose; cavalry-men were cutting down foot-soldiers with their swords to make room for themselves, and the foot-soldiers were answering with their bayonets. It was a general every man for himself; at every step men were falling from the bridge, and sometimes one in clinging to save himself, pulled down five or six others in a heap. And as the confusion and the shouting and firing, and the noise made by those who fell, grew louder every moment, and the spectacle so hideous that it seemed impossible for anything to be worse, we suddenly heard a sound like that of a thunder-clap—the first arch of the bridge had given way and fallen with all who were on it. Hundreds of poor men disappeared, and thousands of others were lamed, crushed, or torn to pieces by the falling stones. A sapper of the engineers had blown up the bridge! There arose a great cry of treason, which echoed along the streets and promenades. "We are lost; we are betrayed!"

It was a desperate and overwhelming clamour on all sides. Some of our men, turned to madmen by despair, rushed on the enemy like wild beasts brought to bay. Apparently they saw nothing, and had no feeling left in them but the primeval instinct of revenge. Others smashed their muskets, cursing both heaven and earth for their ill-fortune. As for the mounted officers, they jumped into the river in order to swim across, and many of the soldiers did likewise, without even throwing away their knapsacks. The thought that they might have got away, and that now at the last moment they were about to be slaughtered, had driven them mad. I had seen many dead bodies the previous night floating along the river, but now it was far worse. All these poor, wretched men were struggling and uttering the most heartrending cries, while they clung to each other. The water was alive with arms and heads. Then Captain Vidal, the composed man, whose steady face and severe eye had kept us to our duty, himself lost heart, and, with a strange laugh, he put his sword in its scabbard, and said, "Now, it is all over."

I put my hand on his arm; he gazed at me with a very gentle look, and said, "My child, what do you want?"

The idea came into my head all at once, and I replied, "Captain, I have been for four months at Leipsic, in the hospital, and have bathed in the Elster, I know a place where one can cross on foot."

He asked me where it was, and I told him it was ten minutes' walk above the bridge. Then he drew his sword again, and with

a voice like thunder he cried, "Follow me, lads, and you, Bertha, go first."

The whole regiment, now numbering about two hundred men, set off to march, and about one hundred others from different battalions, seeing us going off with some courage, joined us without knowing in the least where they were going. We found the Austrians already on the terrace of the avenue; lower down spread the gardens, separated by hedges until they reach the river. I knew the road well; many a time Zimmer and I had walked there in July, when it seemed like a carpet of flowers. Of course, many shots were fired at us, but we no longer took the trouble to return them. When we came to the ford, I entered the river first, Captain Vidal followed, and then the others, two by two. The water reached to our shoulders, for the river had been filled by the rains of autumn. In spite of that, we crossed quite safely, and not one of us was lost. Nearly all of us had our muskets still in our hands when we reached the farther bank, and we then made straight across the fields; we came to the little wooden bridge which leads to Schleissig, and then turned our faces towards Lindenau. Everybody was very silent; sometimes we looked at the opposite bank of the Elster, and there we saw the battle going on furiously in the streets of Leipsic. For a very long time the noise of the guns continued to reach us, and it was not until two o'clock when we discovered the great line of troops, guns, and baggage, that reached as far as the eye could see along the road to Erfurt, that the sound of the battle became lost in the rolling of the waggons.

## CHAPTER XXI

Up to the present time I have been relating the great events of the war; I have been telling of battles which have been glorious to France, despite our misfortunes and our failures. When one is compelled to fight single-handed against the whole of Europe, always one against two and sometimes against three, and is at last defeated, not by the bravery or the genius of the enemy, but by means of treason and overwhelming numbers, there is no disgrace in such defeat, and it would be wrong of the victors to boast about it. It is not numbers that make an army or a people great, but their virtues. I believe this in the most profound depths of my soul, and I think that all honest men of every clime will agree with me.

It now remains for me to tell of the miseries of retreat, and that seems to be the most difficult task of all. We are told that confidence gives courage, and that is especially true of the French. As long as they are going forward, and hoping for victory, they are as united as the fingers of one's hand, and the command of their leader is the law which they all obey, for they feel that discipline alone enables them to become conquerors. But as soon as success leaves them, and they have to retreat, everybody seems to lose confidence, except in himself, and orders are disobeyed. Then it happens that these men, once so proud, who had advanced most gleefully to meet the foe, are scattered right and left, sometimes marching alone, and sometimes in small bands, and the people who used to tremble at their very approach, grow courageous; they come forward at first timidly and then when they see that no harm will befall them, they behave insolently, and attack the poor stragglers in order to carry them off, just as we see in the winter time, the crows fly down on a poor fallen horse, which they dared not approach within half a league as long as it was able to walk. I have beheld these things myself. I have seen miserable Cossacks, wretched beggars with old rags clinging around them, with dusty caps drawn over their heads, rascals who had never shaved, who were very dirty, mounted on miserable, lean horses without saddles, their feet in small pieces of rope instead

of stirrups, with old rusty pistols instead of muskets, and a long nail at the end of a pole instead of a lance, I have seen these rascals, looking like jaundiced Jews, stop ten, fifteen, or twenty soldiers to carry them off like sheep. As for the peasantry, those great clumsy fellows who not long ago would shake and tremble if we looked at them angrily, I have seen them behave in a very arrogant manner towards veterans, dragoons, artillerymen, soldiers from Spain, men who could have knocked them down with a blow; I have heard them vow they had no bread to sell, when we could smell the bread baking at the time; also that they had no wine or beer, or anything else, while we could hear jugs tinkling all around like the bells of a village. And we dared not shake them, or bring them to reason, because we were no longer under the force of discipline, and under the direct cohesion of our officers' command. And then came hunger, misery, weariness, and sickness to overwhelm us. The sky was grey, and the rain poured down, while the autumnal wind seemed to freeze us. How could poor conscripts, so young that they had no moustache, and so emaciated that you could almost see through their ribs as through a lantern, how, I ask, could poor creatures like these endure such misery? They perished by the thousands; we saw nothing else along the roads. The terrible typhus fever dogged our heels. Some say it is a kind of plague, engendered by dead bodies not buried deeply enough; others say that it is the result of suffering so great that human nature cannot endure it. I do not know what the truth may be, but the villages of Alsace and Lorraine, into which the typhus fever was brought, would not be likely to forget it. Out of a hundred who were attacked by the fever, not more than ten or twelve recovered. I must conclude this sad story. On the 19th we bivouacked at Lutzen, where our regiments rallied as well as they could. Next day, quite early, while marching on Weissenfels, we were compelled to open fire on the Westphalians, who followed us as far as the village of Eglaystadt. On the 22nd, we bivouacked on the ramparts of Erfurt, where new shoes and clothes were given to us. Five or six broken-up companies joined our regiments; they were nearly all conscripts, who were breathing and that was about all. Our new things fitted about as well as sentry-boxes, but that did not prevent us feeling grateful for the warmth of them, which seemed to put new life into us.

On the 23rd we had to proceed, and next day we passed by Gotha, Teitlèbe, Eisepach, and Salmunster. The Cossacks

watched us from their skinny horses, some of the Hussars gave them chase, and they would scamper away like robbers, and then come back again. Many of our men had a bad habit of going out pillaging at night while we were on bivouac, and very often they were discovered, for when the roll-call came next day, some of them were always missing, and at last our sentinels were told to open fire on the stragglers. My temperature had been very high ever since we left Leipsic. It seemed to get worse and worse, and I was shivering all the time; so weak had I become, that it was with the greatest difficulty that I could get up in the morning to proceed on the march. Zebedee would look at me in a doleful manner, and sometimes he would say, "Come, Joseph, have courage; we shall get back home after all."

Words like these seemed to put new life into my veins, and I replied, "Oh, yes, we shall get back home all right. I feel that I must see my own dear town again," and then I shed tears.

Zebedee carried my knapsack for me, and, when I was more wearied than usual, he would say to me, "Come and lean on my arm; every day brings us nearer; it is only fourteen or fifteen days' march now, and that is nothing."

This comfort kept my heart cheerful, but I really had not the strength to carry my musket, for it seemed as heavy as lead. I could eat nothing, and my knees shook, but for all that, I never felt despair. I said to myself, "When you see the church tower of Phalsbourg once more, you will lose your fever, and you will have fresh air, Catherine will nurse you, all will be well and happy, and you will be able to marry her."

I saw many others like me, who gave up in desperation by the way, but they were worse than I was. My hopes did not fail me until, about three leagues from Fulda, on the road to Salmunster, we were told while we were resting that 50,000 Bavarian troops were placed across the line of our retreat, and had occupied the forests through which we had to pass. This seemed to be the last straw, and I felt that I had no strength for fighting of any kind, even to defend myself with a bayonet, and that all my labour in marching so far was in vain. I determined to make one more effort when the order came to march, and I tried to stand up. Zebedee came along and said, "Joseph, have courage." But it was of no use; I began to cry like a child, and told him I could not. "Come, get up," said Zebedee.

"I cannot! I cannot," I replied. I clung very tightly to

him, and I saw that the tears were also running down his cheeks. He tried to carry me, but even he was too weak. Then I caught hold of him and begged him not to abandon me. Just then Captain Vidal came up, and looked at me rather mournfully. He said, "Come, come, my boy, the ambulance waggons will very soon be here, and they will take you."

I knew quite well what that meant, so I drew Zebedee towards me and I clasped my arms round him while I whispered to him, "Zebedee, listen; you must kiss Catherine for me; I ask you to promise me. I wish you to tell her that I died embracing you in order that you might bring her my last kiss."

He himself sobbed and said, "Yes, my poor Joseph, I will tell her so."

I could not let go of him, but he placed me down gently, and went away as quickly as he could, without looking back. The regiment marched on. For a long time I looked after it, as a man may look after the last vanishing hope of his life. Other stragglers from the battalions were hidden near the bank. At last I closed my eyes, and did not open them till quite an hour afterwards, when I was awakened by the sound of guns, and saw a regiment of the Guards marching quickly along the road with baggage waggons and guns. On some of these guns I saw they had sick men, so I besought them to take me. But, of course, no one paid the least attention to my cries. On they went, and the firing grew louder and louder. I should think that 10,000 men, both horse and foot, passed that way, and I really had no strength left to cry out; and then the last of all this large body of men went by. I watched their knapsacks and hats till they reached where the road descends, and then they disappeared. I was about to lie down for the last time, when suddenly I heard a great noise on the road. Five or six guns were being drawn rapidly along by strong horses, the men riding on the right and left with drawn swords, and the waggons behind them. I had no more hope from them than from those who preceded them, and yet I could not help looking at them. All at once, I saw by the side of one of the guns, a tall, thin, red-haired man riding along. He was a quartermaster, with the Cross of the Legion of Honour, and in him I recognised Zimmer, my old companion of Leipsic. He was going by without seeing me, but I mustered all my strength to shout out to him, "Christian, Christian." And then, despite the noise of the guns, he stopped, and turned round, and, seeing me at the foot of the trees, he stared with large round eyes, full of wonder. I besought him to

have pity on me. He came up, looked at me, and turned pale. "Good Heavens, is it you, Joseph?" he said, as he jumped down from his horse. And then he took me in his arms as though I had been a child, and told the driver of the last waggon to stop. He carried me carefully, and laid me on the waggon with my head on a knapsack. I also saw that he spread a large cavalry cloak over my legs and feet, and then he said, "Now, then, forward; it is getting very hot out there."

This is all I can remember, for my senses at once left me. I seemed to hear something like a distant rolling of thunder, and cries and orders, and in my fancy I saw the tops of the huge pine trees gliding by us on the sky line in the middle of the night, but it was all a dream to me. The only thing that I was certain of was that on that day, near Salmunster, in the forest of Hanau, we fought a great battle against the Bavarians, and marched on over their bodies.

## CHAPTER XXII

It was on 15th January 1814, ten weeks after the Battle of Hanau, when I came to my senses in a warm bed at the end of a very cosy little room. Looking at the beams of the ceiling above me, then at the diamond window-panes, over which the frost had spread its fancy blossoms, I said to myself, "This is winter." At the same time I heard a sound like the firing of cannon and crackling of fire on the hearth. Soon afterwards I turned round, and saw a very pale girl sitting near me with her hands crossed, and I recognised Catherine. I also recognised the room where I used to come to spend those happy Sundays before going away to the war. Only the noise of the guns, which kept continually going on, made me fear that I was still in a dream. For a long time I watched Catherine, who seemed to me to be very beautiful, and I thought to myself, "Where is Aunt Grethel? How did I come back to my own land? Can it be that Catherine and I are married?"

At last, with an effort, I said in a low voice, "Catherine," and, turning her head, she looked at me, and cried out, "Joseph, do you know me?"

I replied, "Yes." And then I held out my hand to her. She came up to me trembling, and I was strong enough to hold her in a long embrace, while we wept together in gladness.

But still the guns seemed to boom like thunder, and my very heart seemed to freeze at the sound. I asked what that noise was.

"It is the cannon at Phalsbourg," replied Catherine, and she embraced me more tightly.

"The cannon at Phalsbourg?" I replied.

"Oh, yes," she replied, "the town is besieged."

"Phalsbourg," I replied. "Then the enemy is in France."

I could not speak another word. So all our suffering, all our tears, the loss of thousands of men on the battlefields, had just resulted in the invasion of our own country. For more than an hour, in spite of my joy at being in the presence of her whom I loved, the sad thought remained with me, and even to-day, old and grey as I am, it comes back to me with bitterness and sorrow. We have seen that, we old men, and it is

right that the young men should know it. We have seen the Germans, the Russians, the Swedes, the Englishmen, the Spaniards, all masters of France, occupying the garrisons in our towns, taking whatever they thought fit in our fortresses, insulting our soldiers, pulling down our flags, and dividing amongst themselves not only those conquests we had made since 1804, but even those of the republic. It was indeed a very heavy price for ten years' glory.

But let us talk no more of these things. The future will judge of them. History will relate that after Lutzen and Bautzen, the enemy offered to leave us Belgium, a part of Holland, the whole of the left bank of the Rhine, as far as Basle, together with Savoy and Italy, yet the emperor refused these terms, excellent as they were, just because he put his own pride above the happiness of France!

And now to come back to my story. A few days after the Battle of Hanau, thousands of waggons filled with wounded men had covered the roads from Strasburg to Nancy; they reached in one long line from the end of Alsace into Lorraine. Catherine and Aunt Grethel were standing at their door, watching this mournful procession, and one can imagine what their feelings were. More than 1200 waggons had passed, and I was not there. Thousands of fathers and mothers, who had come from many parts of the country around, were watching all along the road, and very many were obliged to go home, knowing that their children were no more. On the third day, Catherine recognised me in a carriage with a large basket attached, of the kind that they use near Mayence. I was amongst many other unfortunates like myself, with pinched and hollow cheeks, all skin and bone, and nearly dead with hunger. Catherine cried from afar, "I see him; it is Joseph."

But nobody would believe it, and even Aunt Grethel had to look a long time; but at last she said, "Yes, it is he; take him out, it is really our Joseph."

So I was taken into their house, and watched by day and by night. I continually called out for water, but the happiness of breathing my native air, and of seeing those whom I loved, saved my life.

About six months afterwards, on 15th July 1814, Catherine and I were happily married. Father Goulden, who regarded us as his own children, took me into partnership, and we all lived together in the same old house, the very happiest people in the world. The wars were over, the enemies were

retreating step by step, the Emperor Napoleon had been sent to the Island of Elba, and under Louis XVIII. we possessed all reasonable liberty. Once again we enjoyed the happy time of youth, love, peace, and work. We felt every hope for the future, and believed that every man with good conduct and economy might make a position for himself, and win the respect of other men, and bring up his family respectably without the least fear of being taken as a conscript at the end of seven or eight years. As for Father Goulden he was not very pleased to see the old king, and the old nobility come back. Still, he thought they had suffered enough in other countries to teach them that they were not the only people in the world, and to make them respect our rights, and he also thought that the Emperor Napoleon would have the good sense to be quiet; but, of course, he was mistaken. The Bourbons had come back with all their old ideas, and the emperor only waited for an opportunity to take his revenge. All this meant very much misery for us, and I may tell you about it at some future time if this history does not seem to be too long, but I think here we will stop for the present. If reasonable people tell me that I have done a good thing in relating my experiences of the campaign of 1813, in order that they may teach the young a lesson on the empty vanity of military glory, and show them that the best happiness lies in peace, liberty, and honest work, why, then I will relate the sequel of these events, and will tell you the story of Waterloo.

# WATERLOO

# WATERLOO

## CHAPTER I

I HAVE never seen anything so joyous as the return of Louis XVIII., in 1814. It was the springtime, when the hedges, the gardens, and all the orchards were in blossom. We had had enough of misery during the years that had passed; there was always the dread of being taken away by the conscription, never to return. We had become weary of all the battles, and the glory, the captured guns, and the singing of Te Deums, and all we wanted was to live in peace, to enjoy repose, and to try and acquire a little property by means of honest work, and to dwell with our own folk in honest contentment and as well-behaved persons.

Yes, everybody was content, except the old soldiers and the teachers of fencing. Well I remember how, on 3rd May, when the order arrived to display the white flag on the church, all the town seemed to tremble, because of the soldiers of the garrison, and it was necessary to give six louis to Nicholas Passauf, the plasterer, who courageously accomplished the act. We could see him from the streets with his banner of white silk, embroidered with the fleur-de-lis, and from the barrack-room windows the marines were firing at him, until he hastened to hide himself in the granary of the Trois Maisons, while the marines sought to kill him.

That was the way those people behaved. But the artisans, the peasants, and the townspeople with one accord cried "Peace for ever!" "Down with the conscription and the commune of rights," because everybody was weary of living from hand to mouth and of having his bones broken by reason of things which did not at all concern him.

One needs little imagination amidst this universal happiness. I felt the happiest of all. Others had not been fortunate enough to return from the terrible battles of Weissenfels, Lutzen, and Leipsic, to say nothing of the typhus fever. As

for me, I knew what glory was, and thereby my love was enhanced for peace, as also was my dread of the conscription.

I had returned to Father Goulden's house, and as long as I live I shall remember the way in which he received me. Never shall I forget his crying out, "Joseph, it is you! Oh! my dear child. I believed you were lost!" And then we wept and embraced each other, and ever since we continued to live together like comrades. He made me recount to him my battles, a thousand times over, and he would laugh and call me his old soldier.

In his turn he would relate to me his experience of the siege of Phalsbourg, and would tell how the enemy appeared before the town in the month of January, and how the republican troops, with the aid of a few marines, had made haste to put the guns on the ramparts; how people had been compelled to eat horse-flesh, because of the scarcity of better meat; and how they broke up their furnaces in order to make bullets. Despite his sixty years, Father Goulden served at a bastion on the powder magazine, near the Bickelsberg, and I seemed to see him, with blue skull-cap and spectacles, sighting a twenty-four pounder. The picture made us both laugh, and so the time passed along. We began to fall again into our old habits. I set the table and made the soup. I also returned to my little chamber, where I thought of Catherine by night and by day. But there was this difference: instead of living in fear of the conscription, as in 1813, there were other things to occupy the attention. Men are never contented. They always have something to worry them. How often have I observed this in the course of my life! And I will relate what it was that troubled me. You must know that Catherine and I were to be married. It was quite understood and agreed on. Aunt Grethel was also willing. But unfortunately, the conscripts of 1815 had received permission, but it was withheld from those of 1813. One was not so much exposed to danger as under the empire, and many had retired to their own villages to live in peace and quietness without the fear of a gendarme looking after them. But notwithstanding this, it was necessary to obtain permission before one could get married. The new mayor, M. Jourdan, would not allow my name to appear on the marriage register without the necessary permit, and that worried me.

As soon as the gates were opened, Father Goulden wrote to the Minister of War, whose name was Dupont, stating that I was at Phalsbourg, still far from well; that I limped like one

deformed, and that I had been taken by the conscription in a hurry. Also that I was no good as a soldier, though I might become an excellent father of a family. That it would be sheer murder to prevent me from marrying, because there was never a man worse put together than I, or more full of physical defects, and that I should soon have to go to the hospital, etc.

It was an excellent letter, and it told the truth. The idea alone of having to go away again would have made me ill. Thus, day after day, we waited, Aunt Grethel, Father Goulden, and myself, for the minister's reply. As for me I was so impatient that it is difficult to describe my feelings. When Brainstein, the postman (the son of the bell-ringer), passed along the street, I could hear him half-a-mile off; I became too excited then to go on with my work, and remained gazing out of the window at him. I watched him as he went from one house to another, and when he tarried a little while I murmured to myself: "Why does he waste his time talking like this? How is it that he doesn't deliver me my letter at once? He is a veritable chatterbox, this young Brainstein." I grew quite angry with him, and sometimes I ran down into the street and said to him, "Have you nothing for me?"

"No, M. Joseph, no, I have nothing," he would reply, looking over his letters again.

And then I would go back quite sad, and Father Goulden, who had been watching me, would say, "My child, my child, be a little more patient. It will come. We are not at war now."

"He has had time to answer me ten times, M. Goulden."

"Do you suppose he has nothing to attend to but your affairs? He gets hundreds of letters of that sort every day; everybody gets his answer in his proper turn, Joseph. And then, everything has been turned upside down. Come, come, we are not the only people in the world; many other brave young men, who want to get married, are waiting for permission to do so."

I thought his reasons very sound, but could not help saying to myself, "Ah, if that minister knew how much pleasure he could give us by writing two words, I am sure he would write them immediately. How we should bless him—Catherine and I, and Aunt Grethel, and all of us!" But all we could do was to wait.

On Sunday, as you may suppose, I had resumed my old habit of going to Quatre Vents; and those days I used to wake up very early. I cannot say what it was that awoke me. At

first I used to fancy I was still a soldier, and felt cold all over. Then, when I opened my eyes, I looked at the ceiling, and remembered that I was at Father Goulden's, at Phalsbourg, in my own little room; that it was Sunday, and that I was going to see Catherine. This idea aroused me entirely; I fancied I saw Catherine before me, with her pretty pink cheeks and blue eyes. I should have liked to get up at once, dress, and start off; but the clock was striking four, and the town gates were not yet opened.

I had to wait, and this delay annoyed me very much. To keep my patience, I used to think over the incidents of my love-making with Catherine. I thought of the early days, the fear of the conscription, the unlucky number I drew, how the old gendarme Werner had called out, "Fit for service" at the town hall; my departure, the route, Mayence, the Capuzignerstrasse, the kind woman who had prepared me a foot-bath there; and then, later on, Frankfort, Erfurt, where I received the first letter from home, two days before the battle; the Russians, the Prussians—in fact, everything . . . and I could have shed silent tears, but the thought of Catherine always came back to me. Then five o'clock struck, and I jumped out of bed, washed and shaved myself, and Father Goulden, still comfortably behind his bed-curtains, with his nose pointing upwards, would say to me, "Ah, I hear you, I hear you. You've been turning and tossing about for the last half-hour. Ah, ha, ha, it is Sunday to-day!"

That used to make him laugh; and I laughed, too, as I wished him good morning, and then went down the staircase at a jump. There were not many people in the streets as yet; but Sepel, the butcher, used to call out to me every time, "Ah, Joseph, just come here; I have something to tell you!"

But I did not even turn my head; and two minutes later I was already on the high road to Quatre Vents, beyond the outworks and the glacis. What lovely weather it was! what a beautiful year! How everything was growing green and flourishing, and how busy the people were, making up for lost time, planting their early cabbages and beetroot, and digging up the earth that the cavalry had trodden down! How every one was gaining fresh courage, and hoping in the bounty of God for the sun and the rain which we wanted so badly. All along the road, in the little gardens, women, old men, every one, in fact, dug and worked, and ran about with watering-pots.

"Hullo, Father Thiébeau," I cried; "ha, Mother Fürst; courage, courage!"

"Yes, yes, Master Joseph, you are quite right, we must work hard; this blockade has thrown everything back, and we have no time to lose."

And the wheelbarrows, and the carts laden with bricks and tiles, planks, timber, and joists, were early rolling towards the town, to rebuild the houses, and repair the roofs that had been shattered by bomb-shells! How the whips cracked and the hammers resounded throughout the country! On all sides you saw carpenters and masons around the "gloriette" windows. Father Ulrich and his three boys were already on the roof of the "Panier Fleuri," that had been sadly battered by cannon-balls, putting up the new framework; one could hear them whistling and hammering in tune. Ah, yes, it was a busy time; peace had returned! Nobody thought of wishing for war then; everybody wished to repair the injury that the war had done, and understood what peace at home is worth; no, no, all knew that a saw or a plane did better work than a cannon; every one knew how many tears and how much labour it costs to repair, in ten years, the mischief the bomb-shells can do in two minutes.

And how happily I ran along then! No more marching, no more countermarching; I knew where I was going, without receiving orders from Sergeant Pinto. And the larks, tremblingly darting upward towards the sky, how beautifully they sang! and the quails, and the linnets! Gracious God, one is only young once! And the beautiful freshness of the morning, the sweet smell of the dog-roses in the hedges; and the finial of the old roof of Quatre Vents, and the little chimney smoking gaily. I said, "It is Catherine who lights the fire yonder, and she is preparing our coffee now;" and how I ran! At last I was near the village and I walked a little more slowly to get my breath, while I looked at the little windows and laughed in joyful anticipation. Then the door opened, and Mother Grethel appeared, still in her woollen skirt, with a big broom in her hand; she turned round, and I heard her cry out, "Here he is! here he is!" And almost immediately Catherine came running out, looking prettier than ever, in her little blue cap.

"Ah, that's well, that's well," she would cry, "I was expecting you."

How happy she looked, and how I embraced her! Ah, there is nothing like youth. I can see these things before me now. I seem to go back once more into the old room with Catherine;

and see Aunt Grethel, waving her broom with enthusiasm, and crying, "No more conscription! that is done with!"

Then we laughed with all our hearts, and they made me sit down. While Catherine looked at me, Aunt Grethel resumed, "Well! that rascally minister has not written yet? Will he never write? Does he take us for fools? The other stirred himself too much, and this one does not stir himself enough! it is very annoying, though, to be ordered about like that. You are no longer a soldier, because you had been left for dead; it is we who saved you, and they have nothing more to do with you."

"Without doubt, you are right, Aunt Grethel," I replied; "but for all that we cannot be married without going to the mayor's; and if we don't go to the mayor's, the clergyman dare not marry us in church."

Then Aunt Grethel became very grave; and at last she said, "Look here, Joseph! Those people, from first to last, always arrange everything for their own interest. Who is it pays the gendarmes and the judges? Who is it pays the curés? Who is it that pays all of them? Why, we; and now they won't allow us to marry. It is an abominable thing! If this goes on, we will go to Switzerland and get married."

These words calmed us a little; but we would soon grow merry, and pass the rest of the day in laughing and singing.

## CHAPTER II

Despite all my great impatience, I saw something new every day; and these things come back to me now, just like a veritable comedy played at a fair. I saw the mayors, deputies, municipal councillors of the villages, dealers in corn and wood, gamekeepers and rural constables, all the people who for the last ten years had been looked upon as the emperor's best friends, and who had, moreover, been very angry when any one said a word against his Majesty. I saw them, in the streets, and in the market place, and everywhere else, crying out against the tyrant, the usurper, the Corsican ogre. One would have thought that Napoleon had done them all manner of harm, whereas they and their families had always enjoyed the best places under him.

Since then I have often thought, that this is the way people get the best places under all governments; but, in spite of that, I should be ashamed to cry out against those who could no longer answer me, and whom I had flattered a thousand times. I would rather work, and remain poor, than become rich by such means as that. But that's the way of the world.

I ought to mention that our old mayor and three of our councillors did not follow this example. M. Goulden used to remark that at least these persons had some self-respect, and that the others were devoid of honour.

I can also remember how one day the mayor of Hacmatt, who had come to have his watch mended at our shop, began to talk in such a way against the emperor, that Father Goulden got up suddenly, and said to him—

"Look here, Monsieur Michel, here is your watch; I will not work for you. . . . What! what! you, who even last year were calling him 'the great man' everywhere you went—you who would never call Buonaparte simply 'The Emperor,' but who used to say, 'The Emperor and King, protector of the Helvetic Confederation,' as if you had your mouth full of soup—you now cry out that he is an ogre, and you call Louis XVIII. 'Louis the Well-beloved?' Come—you ought to be ashamed! Do you take people for fools, and think they cannot remember?"

Then the other replied, "It's easy to see that you are an old Jacobin."

"It does not matter to any one what I am," retorted M. Goulden; "but at any rate I'm not a toady."

He had become quite pale; and at last he cried out, "That's enough, Monsieur Michel; that's enough: sneaks are sneaks under any government."

That day his indignation was so great that he could hardly work; and every moment he was getting up and crying out, "Joseph, if I had had a fancy for the Bourbons, that set of rascals would have disgusted me with them before now. Those are the kind of people who spoil everything; for they approve of everything, and declare that everything is charming, and cannot find fault with anything, and lift up their hands towards heaven in admiration if the King only coughs; and then they want to come in for their part of the cake. And when, by reason of being absurdly flattered, the emperors and kings at last look upon themselves as gods, and revolutions come, then these sneaks abandon them, and begin the same game with their successors. In that way they always remain at the top, and honest people remain in poverty."

This happened at the beginning of May, at the time they were posting up at the mayor's the news that the king had just made his solemn entry into Paris, surrounded by the marshals of the empire, "that the greater part of the population had rushed forth to meet him, that old men, women, and little children had climbed up into balconies to enjoy a sight of him, and that he had gone first to the church of Notre Dame to give thanks to the Lord, and not till afterwards had he entered the palace of the Tuileries."

It was also posted up that the Senate had had the honour of making him a magnificent speech, saying that he must not be alarmed at any disorder, that he must take courage, and that the senators would aid him in setting things right. Everybody approved of this speech.

But a little time afterwards we were to enjoy a new spectacle —namely, the return of the emigrants from the heart of Germany and from Russia. Some came in the slow stage-coaches, others in simple paniers à salade, a kind of chariot of wicker-work, with two or four wheels. The ladies wore dresses of great flowered patterns, and the men nearly all wore the old-fashioned French coat, with knee-breeches, and a great waistcoat hanging down over the thighs, as they are represented in pictures of the time of the republic.

All these people seemed to be proud and glad; they were delighted to get back to their own country.

In spite of the miserable old horses which dragged their wretched straw-filled chariots, and in spite of the curious look of the peasants they had to ride on the box before them as postillions, I felt touched at the sight of them. I remembered how glad I had been, five months before, to see France again; and I said to myself, "Poor people, how they will weep when they see Paris; how glad they will be!"

When they stopped at the Boeuf Rouge, the hotel used by ambassadors, marshals, princes, dukes, and all those rich people who now no longer appeared, one could see them in the rooms, combing and dressing and shaving themselves. Towards noon, they would come down, calling and shouting "Jean! Claude! Germain!" with an impatient air, issuing orders as if they were great personages, and sitting round the large tables, with their old shabby servants standing behind them, napkin on arm; and these people with their old-fashioned costume, their agreeable air and fine manners, made a grand figure, and people said: "Here are some Frenchmen who have come a long distance. They were wrong to go away as they did, and excite Europe against us; but there is pardon for all. May it go well with them, and may they be happy, that is all the ill we wish them!"

Some of these emigrants arrived in post-chaises; then our new mayor, M. Jourdan, Knight of St. Louis, M. le Curé Loth, and the new town-commandant, M. Robert de la Faisanderie, in grand embroidered uniforms, used to meet them at the gate. When the postillions' whips were heard on the ramparts, they came forward with smiling faces, as if something very pleasant were happening to them; and directly the carriage stopped the commandant ran to open the door, with enthusiastic cries of welcome. Sometimes also, out of respect, they stood quite still, and I have seen these grand folks bow to each other, slowly and gravely, once, twice, thrice, coming a little nearer at each salutation.

Then Father Goulden, behind our window, would smile and say, "Look, Joseph! that is the grand style—the grand style of the ancient régime, the old state of things. By merely looking out of our window we may learn fine manners, so that we may use them when we become dukes or princes."

At other times he would say, "Those old folks, Joseph, fired at us at the lines of Weissembourg; they were gallant cavaliers, and fought well, as all Frenchmen fight; but we turned them out for all that!"

Then he would wink, and sit down to work again in quite good spirits.

Then came the report from the helpers and servants at the Boeuf Rouge that these people did not hesitate to assert among themselves "that they had conquered us at last; that they were our masters; that King Louis XVIII. had been reigning ever since Louis XVII., the son of Louis XVI.; that we were rebels, and that they had come to put us in our place!"

Then Father Goulden said to me with an ominous air, "Things are going badly, Joseph. Do you know what all these people will do in Paris? They will demand back their fishponds, their forests and parks, their chateaux, their pensions, to say nothing of high offices and honours and distinctions of all kinds. You think their dress and their wigs very antiquated. Those people are more dangerous to us than the Russians and Austrians—for the Russians and Austrians will go away, and these will remain. They will come and destroy what has taken us five-and-twenty years to effect. You see how proud they are! Many of them have been living in great poverty beyond the Rhine, but they consider themselves of a different race to us—superior beings; they think the people are always ready to be fleeced, as they were before 1789. They say that Louis XVIII. has good sense; so much the better for him. If he is so foolish as to listen to these people, if they even think he can be got to listen to their counsels, everything is lost. It will be a war against the nation. The people have been thinking for twenty-five years; they know their rights, and know that one man is as good as another, and that all talk about noble races is nonsense; every one wants to keep his field, each one wants equality of rights, and all will defend themselves to the death."

That is what Father Goulden said to me; and as my permit did not come, I thought that perhaps the minister had not time to answer me, because of having all these counts and viscounts and dukes and marquises on his hands, demanding back their forests, their fishponds, and their fine offices. I felt indignant, and cried out, "What a miserable state of things! Good Lord! As soon as one misfortune is over another begins, and it is always peaceable people who suffer for the faults of others. Good Lord, deliver us from the nobles, old and new! May they receive every benediction, but may they leave us in peace!"

One morning Aunt Grethel came to see us; it was Friday, and market-day. She had her large basket on her arm, and

seemed cheerful. I looked at the door, thinking that Catherine would come in behind her, and I said, "Ah, good morning, Aunt Grethel. Of course Catherine is in town, and is coming?"

"No, Joseph, no; she is at Quatre Vents," answered she. "We are over our heads in work, sowing seed."

As I looked disappointed, and was secretly annoyed because I had been rejoicing beforehand, Aunt Grethel put down her basket on the table, and lifting up the cloth from it, said, "Look, there is something for you, Joseph—something from Catherine."

I looked, and saw a large bouquet of little may-roses with violets, and three great sprigs of lilac round it, with their leaves. I was pleased at the sight, and laughed and said, "That smells good."

And Father Goulden, who had turned round, laughed too, and said, "You see they are always thinking of you, Joseph," and then we all laughed together.

This had quite banished my sadness. I embraced Aunt Grethel, and said, "Will you take that to Catherine from me?"

And then I placed the bouquet in a vase at the side of the window, near my bed. I smelt it, thinking how Catherine had gone out very early in the morning to gather these violets, and the roses with the fresh dew upon them, and how she had arranged them, with the lilac around them, and then they appeared more fragrant to me than ever, so that I could not leave off looking at them! At last I went out, saying to myself, "You will be able to smell them all night; to-morrow morning you shall put them in fresh water; the day after to-morrow will be Sunday, and then you will see Catherine, and give her a kiss to thank her."

So I went back into the room where Aunt Grethel was gossiping with Father Goulden about the markets, the price of seed, and similar matters, both of them looking cheerful enough. Aunt had put her basket on the ground and she said to me, "Well, Joseph, the permit has not come yet."

"No, not yet; it's a terrible thing."

"Yes," she replied, "these ministers are all one as bad as another. Their places must be filled by men selected for their laziness and worthlessness." Then she added, "But compose yourself; I have an idea now which will change all that." She laughed. And seeing that Father Goulden and I were listening, she went on to say, "Not long ago, when I was in

the covered market, the town-sergeant, Harmentier, announced that a great mass was to be performed for the repose of the souls of Louis XVI., Pichegru, Moreau, and one other."

"Yes, George Cadoudal," said Father Goulden brusquely; "I read it in the *Gazette* last evening."

"Just so—of Cadoudal," said Aunt Grethel. "Well, look you, Joseph, when I heard this announcement, I thought directly, this time we shall get the permit. There are to be processions—penitential processions; we will all go together—Catherine, Joseph, and I; we shall be among the first, and everybody will say, 'Those are good royalists—well-disposed people.' Monsieur le Curé will get to hear of it; and now the curés have arms that can reach as far as those of colonels and generals used to do; we shall go to see him; he will receive us well, and will even draw up a petition for us. I tell you that it will do—that it cannot fail!"

And as she explained all these things to us in an agitated voice, with uplifted finger, Aunt Grethel seemed to be very well pleased with her own cleverness. I was pleased too, and thought, "She is right, that is what ought to be done; this Aunt Grethel is a woman of very good common sense." But then, as I looked at Father Goulden, I saw that he had become very grave, and had even turned away, and seemed to be examining a watch through his magnifying-glass, knitting his great white eyebrows the while. I could tell by his face, at a glance, when a thing displeased him, and I said, "Look here, Aunt Grethel, I think that this might do; but before undertaking anything, I should like to hear what Father Goulden thinks of it."

Then he turned round and said, "Every one is free, Joseph—every one should act according to his own conscience. To hold a service in expiation of the death of Louis XVI.—good! honest men of all parties have nothing to say against its being done, by the royalists of course, for any one who kneels down from self-interest had better have stayed at home. So I pass over Louis XVI. But as to Pichegru, Moreau, and Cadoudal, that is a different thing. Pichegru wished to surrender his army to the enemy, Moreau fought against France, and George Cadoudal is an assassin—three very ambitious men, who only wanted to reduce us to servitude, and each one of the three deserved his fate. That's what I think."

"But, good heavens!" cried Aunt Grethel, "what is all that to us? We don't go there for their sakes, we go to get the

permit. I care nothing for the rest, nor does Joseph. Is it not so, Joseph?"

I felt very much embarrassed, for what Father Goulden had just said appeared to me very just. Seeing that, he said—

"I can quite understand the affection of young people; but, Mother Grethel, one ought never to induce a young man by such means to sacrifice what appears to him honourable. If Joseph does not hold my views respecting Pichegru, Cadoudal, and Moreau, let him go to the procession, it is quite right; I shall never think of reproaching him on the matter. But, for my part, I shall not go."

"Nor shall I go either," I said. "I think with Father Goulden."

I saw that Aunt Grethel was getting angry, for she turned quite red; but she calmed herself almost directly, and said, "Ah, well! Catherine and I will go, because we laugh at all these antiquated ideas."

Father Goulden could not help smiling at her impetuous anger and said, "Yes, everybody is free—do just as you like."

Then Aunt Grethel took up her basket to go, and laughing at him, made me a sign to accompany her.

I put on my overcoat in a hurry, and overtook her at the corner of the street.

"Listen, Joseph," she said, as we walked on towards the square; "this Father Goulden is a good man, but he's an old fool. Ever since I first knew him, he has never been satisfied with anything. He dares not say so, but his one idea is always the republic; he thinks of nothing but his old republic, when everybody was a sovereign—mendicants, charcoal-burners, cobblers, Jews and Christians alike. There's no sense in that. And after all, what is one to do? If he were not so good a man, I would not restrain myself so much before him; only we must remember that but for him you would never have learnt a good trade, that he has done us much good, and that we are bound to treat him with respect. That is why I hurried to get away, lest I might have lost my temper."

"You did very right," said I. "I love Father Goulden, and I love you as if you were my own mother; nothing could cause me more pain than to see you two quarrel."

"What! I quarrel with such a good man as that!" replied Aunt Grethel. "I would rather jump out of the window. No, no! But you must not listen to everything he says, Joseph; for I maintain, that this procession is a very good thing for us,

that Monsieur le Curé will get us the permit; and that is the principal thing after all. Catherine and I will go. As for you, as M. Goulden stays at home, you shall stay there too, but I am sure that three-fourths of the town and of the neighbourhood will come; and whether it is for Moreau, for Pichegru, for Cadoudal, or for any one else, you will see that it will be very fine."

"I'm sure of that," said I.

We had arrived at the German Gate; then I embraced Aunt Grethel once more, and went home very well pleased.

## CHAPTER III

I REMEMBER this visit of Aunt Grethel's so well, because a week afterwards the processions, the expiations, and the preachings, began, and they never left off until the return of the emperor in 1815. Then they were resumed, and lasted until the departure of Charles X. in 1830. All who remember those days know that there was no end of it. Also, whenever I think of Napoleon, I hear the cannon of the arsenal sounding in the morning, and making our little window-panes rattle; and then Father Goulden calls to me from his bed, "Another victory, Joseph! Ah! ah! always victories!" And when I think of Louis XVIII., I hear the bells ringing; I can figure to myself Father Brainstein and his two great lads hanging on to all the bell-ropes of the church, and Father Goulden saying to me with a laugh, "There, Joseph, that's for Saint Magloire or Saint Polycarp."

I can never recall these times in any other way. Under the empire, I also see, at nightfall, Father Coiffé, Nicholas Rolfe, and five or six other veterans ramming their cannons to fire twenty-one rounds, while half Phalsbourg, stationed on the bastion opposite, watched the red flash, the smoke, and the wads flying into the ditches; then in the evening the illuminations, the petards, the squibs, and children shouting "Vive l'Empereur!" and then a few days later, the certificates of death, and a conscription.

Under Louis XVIII., I see wayside altars set up and peasants coming with carts full of moss, evergreens, and little fir-trees, ladies coming out of the houses with great vases of flowers, people lending their candlesticks and crucifixes—and then the processions—Monsieur le Curé and his vicars; the children of the choir, Jacob Cloutier, Purrhus, and Tribou, singing; the beadle Koekli in his red robes with banner held up towards the sky; the bells ringing loud peals; M. Jourdan, the new mayor, with his fat red face, his fine uniform, and his cross of St. Louis; the new town commandant, M. Robert de la Faisanderie, with his three-cornered hat under his arm, his great wig powdered as if with hoar frost, and his embroidery glittering in the sun; and behind him the town council, and innumerable tapers,

which they re-light by one another when the wind blows; then the Swiss Jean Pierre Sirou, with his black-blue beard well shaven, his magnificent hat set square across his shoulders, his large white silk baldric, embroidered with fleurs-de-lis, across his breast, and his halbert held upright shining in the air like a silver disc; then young girls, ladies, and thousands of country people in their Sunday clothes, praying all together. The old women at the head of every village community, with clear voices, repeating incessantly, "Bett fer ouns! Bett fer ouns! (Pray for us, pray for us); the streets strewn with leaves, and garlands and white flags in the windows; the Jews and Lutherans standing behind their half-open shutters, in the upper stories, looking down from their shady position, while the sun illuminated the beautiful sight! Yes, that lasted from 1814 till 1830, except during the Hundred Days, to say nothing of missions, the visitations of the bishops, and other extraordinary ceremonies. I may as well tell you about this at once, for to describe every procession as it occurred would take us too long.

Well, it began on 19th of May 1814. And the same day when Harmentier announced the great expiation, there arrived five preachers from Nancy, young men who continued preaching all the week, from morning till midnight. It was to prepare the way for the expiation. Nothing was talked of in the town but these priests, and people were being converted; all the girls and women were going to confession.

A report was also spread that the national property would have to be given up; and it was said that the procession would prove who were rogues and who were honest men; for the rogues would not dare to show their faces in it. You may imagine how annoyed I was at being obliged to remain, in some measure against my will, among the rogues. Thank goodness, I had nothing to reproach myself with as regarded the death of Louis XVI., nor did I possess national property; all that I wanted was the permission to marry Catherine. I also thought, with Aunt Grethel, that Father Goulden was wrong in being so obstinate; but I should never have dared to speak to him about it. I was very uncomfortable; especially as the people who brought us watches to repair, respectable people too, mayors, and forest-keepers, and such-like, approved of all this preaching, and said that nothing like it had ever been heard. Father Goulden used to listen to them, and go on with his work without replying; and when it was finished he would

simply say, "Here, M. Christopher or M. Nicholas, it comes to so and so much." He did not seem to take any interest in the proceedings; and only when one or another of these people talked of the national property, of the rebellion of twenty-five years ago, of expiation for old crimes, he would take off his spectacles, and raise his head to listen; and then he would say, with a look of surprise, "Ah, bah—ah, bah! What! What, is it as fine as all that, M. Claude? You quite astonish me—and do these young preachers talk so well? Ah, if work were not so pressing, I should go and hear them too. . . . I should also want to be enlightened."

I still thought he would change his mind about the procession for Louis XVI.; and the evening before, while we were finishing our supper, I felt much pleased when he said to me all at once, in a good-humoured way, "Well, Joseph, don't you feel curious to hear the preachers? So many fine things are said about them, that I should really like to know what it is like."

"Oh, Father Goulden," I answered, "I should like it of all things; but there is no time to be lost, for the church is always full at the second bell."

"Well, then, let us go," said he: and he got up and took down his hat. "Yes, I am curious to see that. . . . Those young men astonish me. Let us go."

We went out accordingly. The moon shone so bright outside that one could recognise people as if it had been broad day. At the corner by Fouquet's, one could already see the steps of the church covered with people. Two or three old women, Annette Petit, Dame Balaie, and Jeannette Baltzer, hurried by us, with their shawls tightly fastened, and their broad-bordered caps over their eyes.

"Ah, ha," said M. Goulden, "there go the old ladies; they are always the same!"

He laughed, and said that since Father Colin's time he had not seen so many people at evening service. I could not believe that he referred to the old inn-keeper at the Three Roses, opposite the infantry barracks; and I said to him, "Was he a priest, M. Goulden?"

"No, no," he answered, smiling, "I am talking of old Colin. In 1792, when we had the club at the church, anybody might preach; but it was old Colin who spoke best. He had a fine voice and he said things that were strong and just; people came from Saveren, from Sarrebourg, and even farther than that, to hear him; the ladies and the young girls—citizens they used to

call them then—filled the choir, the galleries, and the pews; they wore little cockades in their caps, and used to sing the Marseillaise to excite the youths. You have never seen anything like it. Look, Annette Petit, Dame Baltzer, and all those whom you see jogging on before us with their prayer-books in their hands, were among the foremost; but they had hair and teeth then—they loved liberty, equality, and fraternity. Ha, ha, ha! poor Bevel! poor Annette! . . . now they are going to repent. They were very good patriots, though, and I think the Lord will pardon them!"

He laughed at the recollection of these old stories, but on the steps of the church he became grave, and said, "Yes, yes; everything changes! I remember that on the day when Colin spoke of the country's being in danger, in '93, three hundred young men of the neighbourhood started to join Hoche's army; he followed them, and became their commander; a terrible man he was, in the midst of his grenadiers. He refused to sign the requisition to make Buonaparte emperor. Now he pours out glasses of liquor over a counter."

Then looking at me as if astonished at his own thoughts, he said, "Let us go in, Joseph!"

We entered, under the great pillars of the organ. We were all crowded together. He said nothing. Some lights were burning at the end of the choir, over the heads of the congregation. The opening and shutting of the doors alone broke the silence. This lasted for about ten minutes. More and more people kept coming in behind us. At last Sirou's halbert was heard to clash on the pavement, and Father Goulden said to me, "Here he comes!"

A light, over the holy water vessel, shed a few rays over us. At the same time a shadow was seen mounting into the pulpit on the left, and Koekli's long pole lighted up two or three tapers around it. The preacher might have been twenty-five or thirty years old; he had a good-looking, rosy face, and his thick fair hair, below his tonsure, fell in curls on his neck.

The service began with the singing of a canticle—the girls of the place sang in the choir. The words were: "O! how happy to be a Christian!" After that the preacher told us from the pulpit that he came to defend faith, religion, and the divine right of Louis XVIII., and asked if any one would have the audacity to maintain the contrary opinion. But no one cared to be stoned, and all were silent. But very soon a tall, thin man seated in a pew opposite, a man six feet high, dark, and

wearing a black capote, rose and called out, "I do! I do! I maintain that faith, religion, the right of kings, and all the rest of it, are mere superstitions. I maintain that the republic is just, and that the worship of reason is worth more than all of them!"

And so he went on. The people were indignant; nothing like this had ever been seen. When he had finished speaking, I looked at Father Goulden. He was laughing quietly to himself, and said to me, "Listen! listen!"

Naturally I listened. The young preacher prayed to God for this infidel; and then he began to speak so finely that the crowd grew enthusiastic. The tall, thin man retorted that it had been well done to guillotine Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, and all the family; whereupon the general indignation became greater than ever, till at last the Baraquins of Bois-de-Chênes, and still more their wives, wanted to rush to his bench and tear him to pieces. But then Sirou came up, calling out, "Make room! make room!"

And then old Keokli, in his red robe, came and stood before the man, who took refuge in the sacristy, lifting up his hands, and crying out that he was converted, that he renounced Satan, his pomps, and all his works. The preacher then offered up a prayer for the soul of this sinner; it was a veritable triumph for religion!

Towards eleven o'clock every one went away; and it was announced that on the next day, which was a Sunday, the procession would take place.

Having been pushed back into a corner by the great crowd, Father Goulden and I were amongst the last; when at length we got out, the peasants of Quatre Vents, of Baraques, of St. Jean des Choux, and of Bigelberg had already passed through the German Gate. Only the shutters of the townspeople were heard closing, and some old women going along the street of the arsenal, chatting among themselves about these wondrous things.

Father Goulden and I walked home through the silence of the night; he said nothing, but walked with his head bent and a smile on his face. And so we came back to our own room.

I lighted the candle, and, while he was undressing, I said to him, "Well, M. Goulden, don't you think they talk finely?"

"Yes—well, yes, Joseph," he answered, smiling; "for young people who have seen nothing, it is not bad."

Then he burst out laughing, and said, "But if old Colin had

represented the Jacobin, I cannot help thinking he would have embarrassed that young man terribly."

I was surprised to hear this. I waited to hear what Father Goulden would say next. Then he drew down his black silk cap over his ears, and said with a thoughtful air, "It's all the same—all the same; but these people are going too fast—a great deal too fast! No one will make me believe that Louis XVIII. knows of all this; no, he has seen too many things in his life not to know men better than that. Well, good-night, Joseph, good-night! Let us hope that an order may soon come from Paris to send back these young men to their seminaries. Good-night!"

I went into my room, and after I got into bed I dreamt a long time of Catherine, of the Jacobin in the church, and of the procession I was to see next day.

## CHAPTER IV

Next morning, the bells began to ring at daybreak. I rose, opened my shutters, and saw the red sun rising behind the powder magazine, above the forest of Bonne-Fontaine. It might be about five o'clock; one could already judge how hot it was going to be, and the air was full of the scent of oak, and beech, and holly leaves that had been scattered in the streets. Groups of peasants were already arriving, and could be heard talking amid the silence. All the different villages, Wechem, Metting, Graufthal, Dosenheim, could be known by their three-cornered hats, slouched down in front, their square-cut coats; the women in long black dresses, and great pointed caps spread out over their necks; those of Dagsberg, Hildehouse, Harberg, and Houpe could be recognised by their big round felt hats; the women, with uncovered heads and short petticoats, were small, dark, slender, and quick as gunpowder. The children followed, carrying their shoes in their hands; but they all sat down in a row on the palings at Luterspech, and put on their shoes to walk in the procession.

Some curés also came in parties of threes and fours, walking behind their villagers, chatting and laughing together in good humour.

As for me, I rested my elbow on the window, and looked at all this, and thought how these people must have started before midnight to get here so early in the morning; how they must have crossed the mountains, walking under the trees for hours, and crossing the little bridges in the moonlight. I thought that religion was certainly a fine thing; the townspeople thought little about it; but for these thousands of toilers in the fields, these woodcutters and labourers, rough, but good-hearted, who loved their wives and children, who honoured the old age of their parents, and cherished them, and closed their eyes reverently in the hope of a better life—for these people religion was the one consolation on earth.

And, looking at the crowd, which was still passing by, I fancied that Aunt Grethel and Catherine must think as I did; and it made me happy to think that they would pray for me.

The day advanced, the bells began to ring, and I still leant

there, thinking. I also heard Father Goulden getting up and dressing. A few minutes afterwards he came into my room in his shirt-sleeves, and seeing me look thoughtful he cried, "Joseph, the most beautiful thing one can see in this world is the religion of the people!"

And as I stood astonished to hear him give expression to my thoughts, he said, "Yes, the love of God, the love of one's country, and the love of one's family are all of the same kind. But what often makes me sad is to see men's love of their country abused to satisfy the ambition of one man, and their love of God diverted to exalt the pride and the spirit of domination of a small number."

These words struck me forcibly; I have remembered them ever since, and have often thought that they were the sorrowful truth.

But to return to that day; you know that ever since the blockade we had been working on Sundays, as well as week-days, because Father Goulden, while serving on the ramparts, had neglected his work, and we were in arrear. So that day, as usual, I lit the fire in our little stove, and prepared our breakfast. The windows were open, and we could hear a great noise outside.

Father Goulden, leaning out of one of the windows, said, "Look, all the shops are closed, except the inns and wine-shops."

He laughed, and I said to him, "Shall we open our shop, Father Goulden? It might do us a good deal of harm."

He turned round, as if surprised. "Listen, Joseph," he said, "I have never known a better lad than you; but you want strength of character. Although God created the world in six days and rested the seventh, we have not created the world, and we have to work in order to live. Why should we close our shop? If we were to close it from self-interest, if we pretended to be pious that we might gain new business, we should be hypocrites. You sometimes talk without reflecting."

I saw at once that I had been wrong, and answered, "Father Goulden, let's open our shop, and people will see that we sell watches; that will not do any one harm."

We had hardly sat down to table when Aunt Grethel and Catherine arrived. Catherine was dressed all in black, because of the service for Louis XVI.; she wore a little cap of black tulle, and her dress fitted her very neatly. Her complexion looked so fair, that I could hardly believe she was the betrothed of Joseph Bertha; her neck was as white as snow, and if it had not been for her little chin, and her blue eyes, and fair hair, I

should have thought it was some one else; some one like her, but still prettier. She smiled when she saw my look of great admiration. At last I said, "Catherine, you are too beautiful now; I dare not kiss you."

"Oh, well!" said she, "there is no reason why you should not."

And as she bent over me I gave her a long kiss, so that Father Goulden and Aunt Grethel looked at each other and laughed, and I wished them a long way off, that I might tell Catherine that I loved her more and more, and would give my life for her a thousand times; but I had no chance of saying it. I thought it, however, and my thoughts were very tender.

Aunt Grethel wore a black dress also, and carried her prayer-book under her arm.

"Come and kiss me too, Joseph," she said. "You see I have my black dress on, the same as Catherine."

I embraced her; and Father Goulden said, "You must come and dine with us—of course, that is understood; but you must take something in the meantime."

"We have had our breakfast," replied my aunt.

"Never mind that. This procession will be over, God knows when. You will be on your feet a long time, you must have something to sustain you."

Then they sat down, aunt on my right, Catherine on my left, and Father Goulden opposite. We drank a good glass of wine, and Aunt Grethel said that the procession would be magnificent, that at least twenty-five curés of the district would be present, that Monsieur le Curé Hubert of Quatre Vents had also come, that the great temporary altar erected in the cavalry quarters was higher than the roofs, that the fir trees and poplars round it were hung with crape, and that the altar itself was covered with a black cloth. She told us all these particulars, while I looked at Catherine, and we both were silently thinking: "Good heavens! when shall we have permission to marry? When will this scoundrel of a minister find time to write and say, 'Marry, and leave me in peace!'"

At last, towards nine o'clock, the second bell having begun to ring, we had to prepare to separate. Then Aunt Grethel said, "It is the second bell—well, we shall come back to dinner as soon as we can."

"Yes, yes, Mother Grethel," answered M. Goulden, "we shall look out for you."

Then they rose. I went down with Catherine to the foot of

the stairs to give her one more kiss. Aunt Grethel cried out, "We must make haste! We must make haste!"

They went out, and I went upstairs again to return to my work. But from that time till nearly eleven o'clock, I could do nothing. The crowd of people was so great that nothing was heard outside but one great murmur, the rustling of footsteps over leaves; and when the procession came out of the church, it produced such a grand effect that Father Goulden himself left off work in order to listen to the hymns and prayers.

For my part I fancied Catherine in that multitude more beautiful than any one there, and Aunt Grethel beside her, repeating in her clear voice, "Bett fer ouns! Bett fer ouns!" I pictured them to myself very tired, and all these voices and these hymns made me think. I had a watch before me, and tried to work; but my thoughts were elsewhere. The higher the sun mounted, the more restless I became; till all at once Father Goulden said to me, laughing, "Well, Joseph, you don't seem to get on well to-day."

And, as I turned quite red, he added, "Yes, in the days when I used to think of Louise Bénédum, it was no use my looking at springs and wheels, for I always saw her blue eyes before me."

He gave a sigh; and I sighed too, thinking, "Yes, you are right, Father Goulden, you are very right."

"That is enough, Joseph," he said a moment afterwards, and took the watch out of my hands. "Go, my boy, try and find Catherine. A man cannot conquer his love; it's stronger than he."

When I heard him say those words, I could have cried out, "Oh, you good man—oh, you just man—you will never know how much I love you." But he had got up to wipe his hands on the towel behind the door, and I merely said to him, "If you really wish it, Father Goulden."

"Yes, yes—absolutely."

I waited to hear no more. My heart was leaping with joy. I put on my hat, and descended the stairs at a bound, crying, "Just one hour, Father Goulden."

And then I was in the street. But what a world of people!—all swarming about; three-cornered hats, felt hats, and caps; and over all, the church bells were slowly ringing.

For more than a minute I stood on our steps, looking round, not knowing which way to turn; and seeing at last that it was impossible to advance in that crowd, I turned into the Ruelle

de Lanche to get to the ramparts, intending to wait for the passing of the procession on the hillock by the German Gate; for it was then coming up the Rue de College. It was about eleven o'clock. On that day I was to see many things which set me thinking several times afterwards; they were omens of great misfortunes, and nobody saw them, nobody had sense enough to comprehend their significance. It was only later, when everybody was in misery up to the neck; when we had to take up knapsack and gun again, to be cut to pieces; it was only then that every one said to himself, "Ah, if there had but been common sense!—ah, if there had only been justice!—if there had only been prudence!—we were so well off!—we should be at home now, instead of having all this confusion again. What was there to be done?—Nothing. We had only to remain quiet, and that would not have been very difficult." What misery!

So I went up the Ruelle de Lanche, where the deserters used to be shot, under the empire. The noise became more distant, the hymns, the prayers, and the sound of bells. All the doors and windows were closed; every one had followed the procession. Amid this great silence, I stopped for a few moments in the shade to get breath; a sweet little breeze was blowing across the fields, over the ramparts. I listened to the tumult in the distance, and as I wiped the perspiration from my brow, I thought to myself, "Where shall I find Catherine now?"

I was going to start again, and climb the staircase of the postern, when I heard some one call out, "Margaret, mark the points."

And then for the first time I noticed that Father Colin's windows on the first floor were open, and that some people were playing billiards in their shirt-sleeves. They were old soldiers' faces, with short hair and stiff moustaches. They were going to and fro, shouting round the billiard-table, regardless alike of Louis XVI. and the mayor, the commandant and the townspeople. One of them, short and sturdy, with his whiskers curled like pistol-barrels, after the hussar fashion, with his cravat untied, was even leaning out, with his billiard cue resting against the window, and looked towards the square, crying out, "We'll have another game of fifty points!"

The idea immediately came into my mind that these must be officers on half-pay, who were thus spending their last sous, and would soon find it hard to live. I set off again, and was hurrying along under the arch of the powder magazine behind

the college, thinking of these things; but when once I was on the slope of the German Gate, all was forgotten. The procession was coming round the Bockholtz corner, and the hymns sounded like solemn trumpet-tones; the young priests of Nancy were running about among the crowd, holding the cross on high to keep order; the Swiss Sirou marched majestically under his banner; in front, all the priests and the choir children were singing, and their prayers rose to heaven; the responses of the crowd that followed sounded like a dull and terrible murmur.

Standing on tip-toe, half-hidden by a shed, I thought of nothing but Catherine, and longed to discover her in the midst of this multitude; but what a number of flags, three-cornered hats and caps defiling down the Rue Ulrich! No one would ever have imagined that there were so many people in our country; indeed, not a soul can have remained behind in the villages, except the little children, and some old women to take care of them.

This continued for at least twenty minutes, and I had given up all hope of seeing Catherine, when suddenly I caught sight of her with Aunt Grethel. Aunt was praying in such a clear voice that one heard her above all the rest. Catherine said nothing, but walked forward with little steps, her eyes cast down. Ah, if I could have called to her, perhaps she would have heard me; but it was enough not to have taken part in the procession, without causing a scandal. All that I can say, and not an old man in Phalsbourg will deny it, is that Catherine was not the least pretty of the girls of the country, and that Joseph Bertha was a man to be envied.

In a minute she had passed by, and the procession halted in the Place d'Armes before the great temporary altar in front of the church. Monsieur le Curé officiated, and silence fell upon the whole town. In the little lanes, to the right and left, all was as quiet as if the people could have seen the priest at the altar; very many knelt down, and others rested on the steps of the houses, for the heat was excessive, and a great number of people had set out before daybreak. This spectacle moved me; and I prayed for my native country, for peace, for all who were dear to me; and I remember how at that very moment some voices were heard, at the base of the slope of the German Gate, saying, in a good-humoured way, "Come—come—a little room, my friends!"

The procession was blocking up the way, so that the travellers found themselves stopped by it; and these voices somewhat

disturbed the devotion of the multitude. Some people in front of the gate made room; the Swiss and the beadle looked to see what it was. I, myself, had, out of curiosity, come near to the balustrade by the shed. Then five or six soldiers, quite white with dust, with bent backs and a look of utter exhaustion, made their way through the slope to reach the lane of the arsenal, where, no doubt, they hoped to find the passage free. I fancy I can see them now, with their worn-out boots, their white gaiters, the old patched uniforms, and the heavy shakos, all discoloured by rain and sun, and by the wear and tear of the campaign. They came on in single file, walking on the edge of the grass, on the slope, to inconvenience the people as little as possible who were seated below. An old soldier who marched past first, with three stripes on his arm, made me feel sad, for he was like my poor Sergeant Pinto, who was killed at the Hinterthor, at Leipsic; he had just such long grizzled moustaches and hollow cheeks, and the same good-humoured air, in spite of all suffering and hardship. He smiled as he carried his little bundle at the end of his stick, and kept repeating, in a low tone, "Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, excuse me." The others followed close at his heels.

These were the first prisoners given back to us by the convention of 23rd April; after that we saw some go by every day, till the month of July. They had no doubt travelled by forced marches to get to France the sooner.

When they came to the end of the lane they saw the crowd reaching in the direction of the arsenal. In order that they should cause as little inconvenience as possible, they went into the recess of the postern, and sat down upon the damp step, with their little bundles on the ground beside them, waiting for the departure of the procession. They had come from a long distance, and scarcely knew what was going on among us.

Unfortunately, the Baraquins of Bois-de-Chênes, the big Horni, Zapheri Koller, Nicholas Cochart the woolcomber, Pinacle the pedlar, who had been made mayor as a reward for having shown the way to Falberg and Graufthal to the allies during the blockade—all these rascals, and some others who wanted the fleur-de-lis—as if the fleur-de-lis would have made them better—unfortunately, all these rascals, who lived on faggots stolen in the woods, saw these men who had marched from afar, the old tricolour cockade on their shakos, and each of them thought, "Here is a chance to show that we are the real supporters of the throne and the altar!"

Boisterously they came, elbowing everybody, Pinacle, his neck in a great black cravat, with a crape band on his hat a yard long, and his shirt-collar above his ears, looking as grave as a bandit who wants to appear honest—Pinacle came first. The old soldier with the three stripes, noticing these people threatening them from afar, got up to see what was the matter.

"Come, come," he said, "there is no need for haste, we are not in the habit of running away. Here we are, what is it you want with us?"

But Pinacle would on no account lose such a fine opportunity of showing his zeal for Louis XVIII., so, instead of answering him civilly, he knocked off the old soldier's hat with a rough blow, crying, "Down with the cockade!"

Of course the veteran was indignant, and wanted to defend himself; but the Baraquins came up in crowds, men and women. They flung themselves on the soldiers, threw them down, tore off their cockades and epaulettes, and trampled them under foot without shame or pity. The poor old man struggled to his feet several times, crying in a voice that might have pierced your heart, "Ah, are you cowards! Frenchmen?"

And each time he said this he got more blows. At last they were left in their corners, all covered with blood, and their clothes in rags; and M. de la Faisanderie, coming up, declared that they should be taken to the lock-up.

As for me, if I could have got down, without thinking of Catherine, Aunt Grethel, or anything, I should have wished to go to their assistance, and the Baraquins would have treated me as they did them. When I think of it now, it makes me tremble; but luckily the wall of the postern was more than twenty feet high; and when I saw them led away, all covered with blood, I set off running in the direction of the arsenal; and I got back to our house so deadly pale that Father Goulden cried out, "Joseph, have you been crushed?"

"No, Father Goulden, no," I replied; "but I have just seen a terrible sight."

And I burst into tears as I told him what I had seen. He walked up and down, with his hands clasped behind his back, stopping from time to time to listen to me, with flashing eyes and compressed lips.

"Joseph," he said, "those men must have done something!"

"No, Father Goulden."

"It is impossible! These men must have brought these things upon themselves. What the devil! we are savages! Even

the Baraquins must have had some other reason besides the cockade."

He could not believe me; it was not until he had heard all the particulars twice over that he said at last, "Well, I believe you. Yes, as you saw it with your own eyes, I believe you; and it is a greater misfortune than you imagine, Joseph. If this goes on, if one does not put a bridle on these rascals, if the Pinacles are to get the upper hand, the honest men will begin to open their eyes."

He said no more; for the procession being over, Catherine and Aunt Grethel returned. We dined together. Aunt was in good spirits, and Catherine too; but my pleasure at seeing them did not prevent this other matter from weighing on my heart. Father Goulden was very pensive.

At last, when night came, I escorted Catherine and my aunt as far as the Roulette, and there we wished each other good-night. It might be eight o'clock, and I went back directly. Father Goulden had gone out to read the *Gazette* at the café Wild Man, according to his custom on Sundays. I went to bed. Towards ten o'clock he came home, and seeing my candle still burning on the table, he pushed open the door and said to me, "It seems there are to be processions everywhere, Joseph; one reads of nothing else in the papers."

He also told me that eighty thousand prisoners were coming home, and that this was a good thing for the country.

## CHAPTER V

THE next day we had to wind up the town clocks. Father Goulden, who was growing old, had entrusted me with this duty, and accordingly I went out early. A strong wind had chased the leaves along the walls during the night, and every one was going towards the altars—some to take back their candles, others their vases of flowers. This sight made me sad, and I said, "Now they have had their funeral service they ought to be satisfied. I sincerely hope the permit will come, and then all will be well; but if these people think they will satisfy us with hymns, they are mistaken. In the emperor's time one had to go off to Russia or to Spain, it is true; but, at any rate, the ministers did not keep young people in suspense. I should like to know what is the good of peace if one is not to marry?"

These thoughts made me angry. I was angry with Louis XVIII., the Count of Artois, the emigrants, and every one, and I said to myself, "The nobles are laughing at the people!"

When I came home, I found Father Goulden there; he had just laid the cloth, and while we were at breakfast, I told him my thoughts. He listened to me with a smile, and said, "Take care, Joseph, take care! Don't let yourself be led astray; it seems to me you are becoming a Jacobin."

He had got up to open the cupboard. I watched him, thinking he was going to take out a bottle, when he held out to me a great square letter with a big red seal.

"Look, Joseph," he said, "here is something that Brigadier Werner charged me to give you."

Instantly my heart gave a great leap, and I looked at the letter with anxious eyes.

"Come, come, open it," said Father Goulden.

I opened it, and tried to read it, but was obliged to take time, and all at once I called out, "Father Goulden, it is the permit!"

"Do you think it is?" said he.

"Yes, it is the permit," I cried, waving my hand in the air.

"Ah, that rogue of a minister! they're all rogues!" said Father Goulden.

But I answered, "Listen! I understand nothing about

politics. Now that the permit has come, the rest does not concern me."

He laughed out loud at this, and exclaimed, "Oh, good Joseph! good Joseph!"

I saw that he was making fun of me a little, but I did not mind that.

"Now I must let Catherine and Aunt Grethel know of this at once!" I cried out in the joy of my heart. "I must send young Chadron over immediately."

"No; you shall go yourself; that will be better," said this excellent man.

"And what about my work, Father Goulden?"

"Bah! bah! on such an occasion as this work must wait! Go, my boy, and make haste! How could you work this morning? You would not see clearly."

It was quite true; I could not have done anything. I got up, so glad that I shed tears. I even embraced Father Goulden; and then, without waiting to change my clothes, I began to run. And see what joy can do. I had already long passed the German Gate, the bridge, the outwork, the auberge of La Roulette, and the posting-station, without noticing any of them; and it was not till I saw the village a short distance ahead before me, and our chimney and little windows, that I remembered it all as if in a dream, and I began to read the letter over again, repeating to myself, "Yes, it is true! it is true! What happiness! What will they say?"

And so I came to the house, and pushed open the door, crying, "Aunt Grethel! Aunt Grethel!"

Aunt Grethel, in her wooden shoes, was just sweeping out the kitchen, and Catherine was coming down the old wooden staircase on the right, with bare arms and her blue kerchief crossed in front. She had been up to the garret to bring down some wood, and when they saw me and heard me cry, "The permit!" they both stood as if paralysed. But I repeated, "The permit!" And then Aunt Grethel waved her hands, just as I had done, and cried out, "Vive le roi!"

Catherine turned quite pale, and leant against the banisters. In a moment I was at her side, and kissed her until, leaning on my shoulder, she wept with joy. I carried her downstairs, while aunt looked from one to the other, crying, "Long live the king! Long live the minister!"

Nobody had ever seen anything like it. Our neighbour, the old blacksmith Rupper, with his leather apron on and his

shirt-sleeves turned up, was attracted by the noise and said, "Well, well, neighbour, what is it?"

He held his great pincers, and gazed with his little eyes wide open. Then we became a little more calm, and said, "We have received permission to marry."

"Ah, so that's it!" said he. "Now I understand—I understand!"

He had left the door open, and five or six neighbours—Anna Schmoutz, the spinner, Christopher Wagner, the gamekeeper, Zapheri Gross, and several others, came in directly; the room was full of people. I read out the permit to all. They listened, and when it was over, Catherine began to cry, and aunt said, "This minister, look you, Joseph, is the best of men. If he were here, I could embrace him, and invite him to the wedding; he should have the place of honour, with Father Goulden."

Then, when our neighbours had gone to spread the news, I began to make a new declaration of love to Catherine, as if the old ones did not count. I made her tell me a thousand times over that she had never loved any one but me; and so we were much affected, and then merry, and then tender again, and then merry, and so on till evening. Aunt, who was superintending the cooking, said aloud, speaking to herself, "That is what you may call a good king." And then she said, "If my poor Franz could return to the earth, how happy he would be this day; but one cannot have everything!"

She also declared that the procession had done us good. Catherine and I did not answer her; our joy was too great. We dined, and had our afternoon walk, and our supper, seeing and hearing nothing; and it was nine o'clock when I perceived, all at once, that it was night, and that I must go away. Then Aunt Grethel, Catherine, and I went away together. It was a fine moonlight night. They accompanied me as far as La Roulette, and on the way we decided that the marriage was to take place in a fortnight. In front of the farm, under the old poplars, aunt embraced me, and I embraced Catherine, and then I watched them as they ascended the hill on their way back to the village. They turned round and waved their hands, and I waved mine too. At last, when they were out of sight, I proceeded towards the town, where I arrived at about ten o'clock. I traversed the great square, and entered our house.

Father Goulden was in bed, but still awake; he heard me open the door softly. When I had lit the lamp, and was going into my room, he called out, "Joseph!"

I went up to him; and looking at me kindly, he held out both hands to me. Then we embraced, and he said, "This is well, my boy; you are happy, and you deserve it. Now go to bed; we will talk of things to-morrow."

So I went to bed, but for a long time I could not sleep; every instant I woke up, thinking, "Is it really true? Has the permit really come?" And then I would say to myself, "Yes, it is true!" Towards morning I fell asleep, and when I awoke, it was broad daylight; I jumped out of bed to dress myself, and just then Father Goulden called out cheerfully, from the next room, "Joseph, why don't you come to table?"

"Ah, pardon, Father Goulden," I replied, "but I was so happy I could scarcely get to sleep."

"Yes, yes, I heard you," he said, laughing, and with that we went into the workshop, where the table was already laid.

## CHAPTER VI

Next to the happiness of marrying Catherine, my greatest joy was in the feeling that I was about to become a citizen; for to work on one's own account is a very different thing from fighting on some one else's. Father Goulden had told me that he would make me a partner in his business; and I pictured to myself Joseph Bertha taking his little wife to mass on Sundays, and then for a walk in the direction of Rocheplate or Bonne Fontaine. This prospect made me very happy. In the meantime, I went every day to see Catherine; she used to wait for me in the orchard while Aunt Grethel was preparing cakes and dainties for the wedding; we used to look at each other for hours; she was so bright and radiant, and seemed to grow more beautiful every day.

Father Goulden, when he saw me return in better spirits every evening, used to say to me, "Well, Joseph, things seem to go better here than they did at Leipsic."

Sometimes I wanted to settle down to my work, but he would not allow it, and said, "Bah! days of happiness are so rare in life! Go and see Catherine; afterwards, if I also should take it into my head to get married, you shall work for both of us."

Then he laughed. Ah! such men as he ought to live a hundred years! What a good heart he had! How just and how simple he was! He was a real father to us; and often, even now, when I think of him to myself, with his black silk cap drawn down over his ears, his grisly beard of eight days' growth, with a good-humoured look in his eyes, and a kind smile on his lips, I seem to hear his voice once more, and the tears come into my eyes.

But now I must tell you of a thing that happened just before our marriage, and the remembrance of which will never be effaced from my mind. It was the 6th of July, and our marriage was to take place on the 8th. I had been dreaming of it all night. In the morning, between six and seven o'clock, I rose; Father Goulden was already at work, with the windows open. I washed myself, and thought I would go over to Quatre Vents; but suddenly a trumpet was blown, and I heard two drummers beating under the French Gate, as if a regiment were marching

in; the trumpeters were trying their mouthpieces, and the drummers were giving a few taps on their drums, to get well hold of the drumsticks. When I heard that, I was struck with amazement. I called out, "Father Goulden, it's the 6th."

"Ah, yes," he replied, "all the town has been talking of it for the last week; but you have had no ears for anything; it is my wedding present, Joseph; I wished to keep it as a surprise for you."

Then I stayed to hear no more. I ran out of the room like the wind, and down into the street. Our old drum-major, Padoue, was already lifting up his stick under the sombre gateway, the drummers were behind him preparing to start, and farther off was Commandant Gémeau on horseback, and the big red plumes of our grenadiers were coming slowly along. Yes, it was the 3rd Battalion. The march began, my blood seemed to boil within me. At the first glance I recognised the long grey overcoats that had been served out to us on the glacis at Erfurt, on the 23rd October 1813; they had become quite green from rain, snow, and wind. It was worse than after Leipsic. The old shakos had bullet-holes in them; but the flag alone was new in its fine oilcloth cover with the fleur-de-lis at the top.

Ah! those who have not served through a campaign can never understand what it is to see one's regiment again, to hear the rolling of the same drums one has heard beating in front of the enemy, and then to say to oneself, "Here are your comrades coming back beaten, humiliated, crushed! Here they come, bowing their heads under another cockade." No, I never felt anything like it before. Later on, many of the men of the 6th, my old officers, and sergeants, established themselves at Phalsbourg, where old soldiers were always well received. There were Laflèche, Carabin, Lavergne, Monyot, Padoue, Chazi, and many more. Those who once were in command over me in the war have worked for me, sawing wood, and doing labourers' work, as tilers, carpenters, and masons. They who had once given me orders have been bound to obey mine; for I was in good commercial standing, whereas they were simply labourers. But I made no distinction, and in speaking to them I always maintained the respect I had felt in the old times for my superior officers, for I always thought, "Out yonder, at Weissenfels, at Lutzen, and at Leipsic, these men who are now obliged to bend their backs and to work hard to support their families—yonder, I say, in the advanced guard,

they maintained the honour and the courage of France." More changes have taken place since Waterloo. Our old standard-bearer, Faizart, has been sweeping the bridge of the German Gate for the last fifteen years. That is not right—no, our country ought to have more consideration.

So this was the 3rd Battalion, coming home in a state of misery that might make the hearts of honest people bleed. Zebedee afterwards told me that they went from Versailles, the 31st March, after the capitulation of Paris, and that they had been marched to Chartres, Châteaudun, Blois, Orleans, and so on, like real Bohemians, for six weeks, without pay or equipments. Finally, at Rouen, they had received orders to cross the whole of France to get to Phalsbourg, and everywhere the processions and funeral services had stirred up the populace against them. They had been obliged to endure everything, even to bivouacking in the fields, while the Austrians, Russians, Prussians, and other beggars were comfortably quartered in our villages.

When he told me of all these miseries long afterwards, Zebedee wept with rage.

"Is France no longer France?" he said. "Did we not defend the honour of the country?"

But what still gives me pleasure in my old days is to remember the manner in which the 6th was received by us. It was known already that the 1st Battalion was coming home from Spain, and that the remains of the regiment and those of the 24th Light Infantry were to form the 6th Regiment of Berry; so that all the town rejoiced at the thought that we should have two thousand men in garrison, instead of a few gunners who were little better than veterans. There was great joy, and everybody exclaimed, "Long live the 6th!" The children ran to the slope of St. Jean to meet the battalion, and the men had never had such a reception as this since 1813. Many old soldiers shed tears, and cried out, from their ranks, "Long live France!" But for all that, the officers marched with their heads bent, and a downcast air; though they waved their hands, to thank the people for this good reception.

As for me, standing on the steps of our house, I watched these three or four hundred men marching by, so ragged that I only knew our regiment by the number. But all at once I caught sight of Zebedee in the ranks; he had grown so thin that his great hooked nose stood out from his face like a beak, and his old greatcoat hung down over his back in ribbons; but he had

a sergeant's stripes, and his big bony shoulders still gave him a look of strength. When I caught sight of him, I shouted in a tone that was heard above the rolling of the drums, "Zebedee!"

He turned round and I rushed into his arms, while he hastily rested his musket on the ground, at the corner of the Fouquet. I was crying like a child. He said, "So, it's you, Joseph? Then at least there are two of us left."

"Yes, it is I," I replied. "I am going to marry Catherine, and you shall be my best man."

So we walked on together. Further on, at the Haute corner, old Furst was standing looking on with troubled eyes. The poor old man was thinking, "Now my son might return too!" When he saw Zebedee coming along with me, he went hastily into the little dark alley where his house was. In the square, Father Klipfel and five or six others were also looking at the battalion, as it stood drawn up in line. They had already received the certificates of death; but still they hoped that perhaps there had been some mistake, for their boys were not fond of writing. They looked on; and then went away while the drums were still rolling.

The roll was called over, and just then the old grave-digger came up. He still wore his little yellow velveteen waistcoat, and his grey cotton cap. He looked behind the ranks, where I was talking with Zebedee, and Zebedee, turning round, saw him, and then became very pale. They looked at each other for a moment. I took the gun, and then the old man embraced his son. They said nothing, but rested for a long time in each other's arms. After that, as the battalion was moving off to the right to go into barracks, Zebedee asked leave of Captain Vidal to go with his father, and gave his musket to the first soldier. Then we went away together, towards the Rue des Capuchins. The father said, "You should know that your grandmother is so old that she cannot get out of bed; otherwise she would have come too."

I went with them as far as their door, and said, "You must come and dine with us, Father Zebedee, and you too."

"I should very much like to," replied the old man. "Yes, Joseph, we will come."

They went into their house; and I went to inform Father Goulden of the invitation I had given, at which he was the more pleased, because Catherine and Aunt Grethel were coming too. As for me, I had never been so happy as I was now, thinking

how my best friend, my betrothed, and all those I loved most, would be in the house together.

That day, at about eleven o'clock, our great room on the first floor presented a cheerful sight. The floor had been well scrubbed, the round table was placed in the middle, covered with a fine white cloth with a red border, and laid with plates and silver for six; the napkins daintily folded in boat shape on the shining plates; the great salt-cellar, the sealed bottles, the large cut-glass tumblers, all glittered in the light of the sun, which poured in over the boxes of lilacs arranged on the window-sills.

Father Goulden had wished that everything should be done liberally, grandly, magnificently, as if for princes and ambassadors; he had brought out his silver, quite an unusual thing, and, excepting the soup, which I had superintended myself, and which contained three pounds of good meat, a head of cabbage, carrots in abundance, and in fact everything that was necessary, such a dish as one can never get as good from the hotel, all the dinner was to come from the Ville de Metz, where Father Goulden had ordered it himself.

So that towards noon we were looking at each other, smiling and rubbing our hands; he in his fine nutbrown-coloured coat, clean shaved, and his great ruddy wig on his head, instead of the black silk cap, his maroon breeches buckled over his thick woollen stockings, and shoes with large buckles on his feet, and I in my sky-blue coat, cut in the latest fashion, with a fine shirt and a pleated front, and my heart radiant with contentment. We were only waiting for our guests—Catherine, Aunt Grethel, the grave-digger, and Zebedee. We walked up and down with smiling faces, saying to ourselves, "All is right; everything is in its place; now we ought to bring up the soup-tureen;" and I looked out to see if any one was coming.

At last Aunt Grethel and Catherine turned the corner of the Rue de Fouquet; they were coming back from mass, their prayer-books under their arms; and farther on I saw the old grave-digger, in his best coat with the wide sleeves, his old three-cornered hat hanging over his shoulders, and Zebedee, who had put on a clean shirt, and had shaved himself. They were coming from the ramparts, and walked arm-in-arm with a sedate air, as people do who look serious because they are perfectly happy.

Then I said, "Here they are, Father Goulden."

We had just time to pour the soup on the bread we had

already toasted, and to put the big steaming soup-tureen in the middle of the table, which we did quite safely, when Aunt Grethel and Catherine came in. I leave you to imagine their surprise when they saw this beautiful table. As soon as we had embraced each other, Aunt Grethel cried out, "So it is the wedding feast to-day, Monsieur Goulden."

"Yes, Madame Grethel," answered the kind man, smiling, for on days of ceremony he used to call her Madame Grethel, instead of Chatterbox, or Mother Grethel. "Yes, it is a marriage feast of good friends. You must know that Zebedee has just come back, and that he and the old grave-digger are to dine with us."

"Ah," said aunt, "that gives me much pleasure."

And Catherine, who was blushing all the time, said to me softly, "Now everything is well. We have all we want to make us quite happy."

She looked at me as she held my hand. And as we sat waiting, some one opened the door; and old Laurent from the Hotel Ville de Metz, with two great baskets with handles, in which the dishes were ranged in good order, one over another, called out from the passage, "Monsieur Goulden, here is the dinner."

"Good," answered Father Goulden, "arrange it on the table for us yourself."

Then Laurent put the small radishes and the fricasseed chicken on the table, and on the right a fat goose, and on the left the beef that we ourselves had put into a dish with parsley; he also produced a good dish of sour-crout, with small sausages, which he placed near the soup-tureen, so that our room had never seen such a dinner before.

Immediately afterwards we heard the old grave-digger and Zebedee coming upstairs; Father Goulden and I went to meet them, and Father Goulden, embracing Zebedee, said to him, "I am delighted to see you! Yes, I know what a good comrade you have been to Joseph, in the midst of the greatest perils."

Then he took the old grave-digger's hand, and said to him, "Father Zebedee, I think you happy in possessing such a son."

And then Catherine came up to us, and said to Zebedee, "I cannot please Joseph better than by kissing you. You wanted to carry him at Hanau, when your own strength was almost gone. I regard you as a brother."

Zebedee, who was quite pale, kissed Catherine without replying; and then we went into the room in silence, Catherine, Zebedee, and I; Father Goulden and the old grave-digger

followed; Aunt Grethel was still arranging the dishes, and then she cried out, "You are welcome, you are welcome! Those who were together in misfortune have now re-united in joy. The Lord extends His goodness over all the world."

She embraced Zebedee, who said to her with a smile, "You are as lively and well as ever, Madame Grethel; it is a pleasure to see you."

"Come, Father Zebedee, you sit down here, at the head of the table," cried Monsieur Goulden joyously; "and you, Zebedee, come here, so that I may have you on my right and left; and further off, Joseph, opposite Catherine and next to Zebedee; and Madame Grethel at the other end, to superintend."

Everybody was pleased with his place. Zebedee looked at me with a smile, which seemed to mean, "If we had had the quarter of such a dinner at Hanau, we should not have fallen down by the wayside!" In fact, joy and good appetite appeared all around. Presently, Father Goulden, with a grave air, dipped the great silver ladle into the soup under the eyes of the guests. First he helped the old grave-digger, who sat silent, and seemed overcome by these honours; then he helped his son, and next Catherine, Aunt Grethel, me, and himself, and so the dinner began in quite a solemn manner.

Zebedee winked at me frequently, and regarded things with supreme satisfaction. The first bottle was uncorked, and the glasses were filled all round. We drank this *vin ordinaire*, which was very good; but there was better to come, and that's why we delayed drinking one another's healths. Then we enjoyed a good slice of beef. The old grave-digger remarked, "That is something good. It is excellent beef."

And when we were praising the fricasseed chicken, I saw that Catherine was a tactful woman; for she said, "You must know, M. Zebedee, that we should have invited your grandmother Margaret, too, whom I often go to see; but she is too old to get up; and therefore, if you will allow me, as she cannot come, I want her at least to eat a morsel with us, and to drink a glass of wine to her grandson's health. What do you think, Father Zebedee?"

"Just so," said the old grave-digger. "I think as you do."

Father Goulden looked at Catherine with tears in his eyes; and as she rose to choose a nice portion, he kissed her, and I heard him call her his daughter.

She went out, with a bottle and a plate. While she was gone,

Zebedee said to me, " Joseph, that girl whom you have chosen deserves every happiness. She is not only a good girl, she is not only a woman who deserves to be loved, but she deserves to be respected, for she has the wit that comes from a good heart. She guessed what my father and I were thinking of when we saw this good dinner. She saw that we should enjoy it a thousand times more if my grandmother partook of it, and that is why I shall always love her as a sister." And then he turned his head aside, and said to me in a low voice, " Joseph, it is in times of enjoyment that one feels the hardship of being poor; one has not only to give one's blood for one's country, but because one has to do it, one leaves those at home in misery, and sees them so when one returns."

I saw that he was getting sad, so I filled his glass, and we drank, and these sorrowful thoughts were dispersed. Catherine came back, too, saying that the grandmother was very happy, that she thanked Father Goulden, and said it was a joyous day for her, and this made every one glad. And as dinner proceeded, Aunt Grethel, when she heard the bell ring for vespers, went out; but Catherine stayed, and as the good wine had inspired us all, we began to talk of the last campaign.

Then it was that we heard the accidents of the great march, in the retreat from beyond the Rhine to Paris; the combats of the battalion at Bibelskirchen and at Sarrebruck, where Lieutenant Baubin swam across the river during a terrible frost, to destroy some boats that were still in the enemy's power; the passage at Narbefontaine, at Courcelles, Metz, Enzelvin, Champlon, and Verdun, always retreating; and the battle of Brienne. There were hardly any men left; but on the 4th of February, the battalion had been reinforced by the remnants of the 5th Light Infantry, and from that time it was under fire every day; on the 5th, 6th, and 7th at Méry-sur-Seine; on the 8th at Sezanne, where the soldiers died in the mud, having no strength left to extricate themselves; the 9th and the 10th at Mûrs, where Zebedee, at night, buried himself in a manure-heap at a farm, in order to get warm; on the 11th the terrible battle of Marché, where Commandant Philippe had been wounded by a bayonet thrust; the 12th and 13th, the passage at Montmirail; the 14th, the battle of Beauchamp; the 15th and 16th, the retrogade movement upon Montmirail, whither the Prussians had come back; the combats of La Ferté-Gauchér, of Jouarre, of Gué-à-train, of Neufchettes, and so on. When the Prussians had been beaten, then came the Russians; and after the Russians

came the Austrians, Bavarians, Wurtembergers, Hessians, Saxons, and Badeners.

I have often heard this campaign of France related, but never as Zebedee told it. When he spoke, his great thin figure trembled, his long nose seemed to go down over his yellow moustache, and his eyes were clouded; he stretched out his hand, in his old ragged sleeve, and one seemed to see before one what he described; one could see the great plains of Champagne, where the villages were smoking to right and left; women, children, and old men wandering about in bands, half naked, one carrying an old palliasse, another some old pieces of furniture on a cart, while the snow slowly descended, and the cannon boomed in the distance, and the Cossacks galloped about like the wind, with kitchen pots and pans, and even old clocks, hanging to their saddles, crying, "Hourra!"

One seemed to see these furious battles, where one fought against ten; the desperate peasants coming to fight with their pitchforks; and in the evening the emperor, in the open air, sitting astride across a chair, his chin resting on his hands, leaning on his stick, opposite a little fire, with his generals standing round. Thus it was that he slept and dreamt. Terrible thoughts must have passed through his head since Marengo, Austerlitz, and Wagram.

"Ah, to fight, to suffer hunger, cold, and misery, marching and countermarching—all that is nothing," said Zebedee, "but to hear women and children weeping and lamenting in French, amid all the devastation, and to know that you cannot save them—that the more enemies you kill, the more will come; when you have to retreat—always to retreat—in spite of victories, in spite of courage, in spite of everything—that's what breaks your heart, Father Goulden!"

As we listened, we looked at one another; no one cared to drink, and Father Goulden, holding down his great head with a pensive air, said in a low voice, "Yes—yes—this is what glory costs! It is not enough to lose one's liberty, to lose all the rights one had gained with so much pains—one must in addition be pillaged, sacked, burnt, and murdered by bands of Cossacks!—one must see what has not been seen for centuries—a lot of brigands laying down the law! Go on—go on; we are listening—let us know all!"

Catherine, seeing that we were depressed, filled the glasses.

"Come, let us drink to the health of M. Goulden, and to the

health of Father Zebedee!" she said. "All these misfortunes are past. They will not come again."

Then we drank; and Zebedee told how the battalion had again to be reconstructed on the road to Soissons, with soldiers of the 18th Light Infantry; how they had arrived at Meaux where a pestilence broke out in the Hospital de la Pitie, though it was winter time, because of the crowds of wounded who could not be attended to.

It was terrible! But the worst of all was when he told of their arrival in Paris by the barrier of Charenton; the empress, King Joseph, the King of Rome, the ministers, the new princes and the dukes, all the grand people hurrying away in chaises towards Blois, and abandoning the capital to the enemy, while the poor workmen in blouses, though they had nothing of the empire but the obligation to give up their sons for it, rushed by thousands to the mayors' houses, calling for arms to defend the honour of France, while the Old Guard drove them back with the bayonet! Then all at once Father Goulden cried out, "That's enough—that will do, Zebedee. Let us change the subject; let us talk of something else!"

He had grown quite pale all at once. But just then Mother Grethel came in; and seeing us silent, and Father Goulden quite disturbed, she asked, "Well, what is going on here?"

"We were talking of the empress, and of the emperor's ministers," answered Father Goulden, with a strange kind of laugh.

"Ah, then I don't wonder if your wine disagrees with you!" she replied. "As for me, if ever I chance to think of it, and to look into the glass, I see that it turns me quite green. Ah, the rascals! Fortunately they are gone."

Zebedee looked downcast; Father Goulden noticed it, and cried out, "Never mind, France is still a great and glorious country. If the new nobles are worth no more than the old ones, at any rate the people are stalwart. Let them do what they will, the citizens, the workmen, and the peasants stand together; they have the same interests; they will not let go what they have got; they will not let others put their feet on their necks. And now, my friends, let us walk out. It is getting late. Mother Grethel and Catherine have some way to go to get back to Quatre Vents; Joseph will accompany them."

"No," said Catherine; "to-day Joseph must stay with his friends; we will go home alone."

"Very well, be it so; Catherine is right," said Father Goulden. "On such a day as this, friends ought to stay together."

So we went out, arm-in-arm: the night was coming on. On the Place d'Armes we embraced again. Aunt and Catherine went towards their village, and we, after walking a few times round the great lime-trees, entered the café of l'Homme Sauvage, where we refreshed ourselves with good foaming beer. Father Goulden told us about the blockade, the attack of the tile-factory at Parnette, the sorties at Bigelberg, at the huts beyond, and the bombardment. It was then I learnt, for the first time, that he had had the management of a gun, and that he had originated the idea of breaking up the melting-furnaces to make balls.

These histories were prolonged until the retreat sounded at ten o'clock. At last Zebedee left us to go to barracks, the old grave-digger went back into the Rue des Capuchins, and we went to bed, where we slept till eight o'clock next morning.

## CHAPTER VII

Two days afterwards was the celebration of my marriage with Catherine at Aunt Grethel's house at Quatre Vents. M. Goulden represented my father; I had chosen Zebedee for my best man; and some old comrades, who had remained in the battalion, were also at the marriage.

The next day Catherine and I had already taken up our quarters at Father Goulden's house, in the two little rooms above the workshop.

Many years have passed since then. Father Goulden, Aunt Grethel, and my old comrades have disappeared from this world. Catherine's hair is quite white; but, ah, well! when I look at her, these old times come back to me; she seems to sit before me as she was at twenty years of age, fair and rosy; I see her arranging our flowerpots along the window-sills above; I hear her softly singing; I see the sun shining on her; and I imagine myself, coming with her down the little steep staircase; and then we come into the workroom together and cry, "Good-morning, Father Goulden," and he turns round, smiling, and answers, "Good-morning, my children; good-morning." He kisses Catherine, who begins sweeping, dusting the furniture, putting the pot on the fire, while we arrange the work we have to do during the day. What good times! what a happy life! what joy! what satisfaction to be young, to have a simple, good, industrious wife! How your whole soul seems to rejoice! How these thoughts appeal to the soul! How one sees the future far before one! We shall never be old! We shall always love one another! We shall always retain those we love about us! We shall always have courage! We shall always go out walking arm-in-arm on Sundays at Bonne-Fontaine! We shall always sit on the mossy banks in the wood, and listen to the bees and the cockchafers humming round the great trees glistening in the light. We shall always smile—what a life! Oh, loving God, what a happy life! And then in the sweet evenings, when we went quietly home, and saw the long streaks of gold lying along the sky, from Wechem to the wood of Mittelbronn, we used to look at them in silence, holding each other by the hand, when the little bell of Phalsbourg began to sound the Angelus,

and all the bells of the villages replied throughout the country, which was already growing dark. Ah, youth! ah, life! everything is still present before me, at this day, as it was forty years ago. Other larks and other linnets build their nests in spring; other blossoms whiten the great apple-trees. Can we indeed have changed so much? Have we really grown old, as others were old in our day? This alone would be enough to make me believe that we shall grow young again, that we shall love each other again, that we shall meet Father Goulden, Aunt Grethel, and all the other good people once more. If it were not for this, it would be too miserable to grow old. God would not give us this trial without hope. Catherine thinks so too.

So at last we were quite happy, and everything appeared to us in roseate hues; nothing could trouble our happiness.

At this time when the allies, by hundreds of thousands,—infantry, cavalry, and artillery, on foot and on horseback, with oak leaves on their helmets and shakos, and in the muzzles of their muskets, and at the point of their lances, were passing by the town to return home, they uttered cries of joy that could be heard a long way off, as the cries of the finches, thrushes, and thousands of other birds of heaven are heard in the mating season. In other times this would have troubled me, because it was a sign of our defeat; but then I consoled myself by thinking, "Let them go, and never come again!" And then Zebedee came and told me that every day Russian, Austrian, Prussian, and Bavarian officers crossed the town to see our commandant, M. de la Faisanderie, on old emigrant, who loaded them with honours—that this or that officer of the battalion had challenged one of the strangers; that another, a half-pay officer, had killed two or three of them in duels, at La Roulette, or l'Arbre Verte, or at the Panier Fleuri, for there were duels everywhere. The people could not bear the sight of the enemy; everywhere they threw down their coats on the grass, and the hospital stretchers were always about. When Zebedee told me these things, or told us how many officers had been put on half-pay, that their places might be filled by others from Coblentz; that the soldiers were to be compelled to be present at mass in full dress; that the curés were superior to everything, and that the epaulette was nothing now, instead of worrying myself, I used to say to myself, "Bah! bah! it will all settle down in the end, if we only remain at peace, and live and work in quiet, that is the principal thing."

I did not consider that, to keep the peace, it is not sufficient

to be content oneself, but that others must be content also. I was like Aunt Grethel, who thought all went excellently when once we were married. She often came to see us, bringing baskets full of fresh eggs, fruits, vegetables, and cakes, for our housekeeping, and she would say, "Eh, Father Goulden, one need not ask if the children are well; one has only to look at them."

And she used also to say to me, "Eh, Joseph, it is better to be married, is it not, than to be marching with a knapsack and a musket on the way to Lutzen?"

"Yes, yes, Mother Grethel, I believe you," I would reply, with a laugh that came from my heart.

Then she would sit down, with her hands on her knees, and say, "All that comes of the peace . . . the peace makes every one happy—and to think that a set of beggars and out-at-heel rascals should still dare to cry out against the king!"

At first Father Goulden, seated at his work, would say nothing in reply; but if she went on long in this way, he said, "Come, come, Mother Grethel, be calm. You know that everybody is free to hold his own opinion; we have two Chambers, we have a Constitution, and every one may think as he pleases."

"That is true," remarked Aunt Grethel, looking aside at me with a malicious air. "In other times we were obliged to hold our tongues; and that shows another difference."

Father Goulden did not continue the subject, for he regarded Aunt Grethel as a good woman, but one whom it was not worth while to convert. He smiled to himself when she did not talk too loudly, and so things went on without any disagreement; then something new occurred.

First there came an order from Nancy, to force people to shut the fronts of their shops during mass on Sunday; the Jews and the Lutherans were obliged to close, like the rest. From that time there was no more noise in the cafés and wine-shops; it was like a city of the dead during mass and vespers; people said nothing, but looked at each other as if they were afraid.

On the Sunday when our shop was closed for the first time, we were dining in the shade, and Father Goulden, who seemed downcast, said, "I had hoped, my children, that all was over, that good sense would be maintained, and that we should have tranquillity for years; but unfortunately I see that these Bourbons are a kind of Dagoberts. All this has a serious look."

He said no more that Sunday, and went out in the afternoon to read the papers. All the people who knew how to read used

to go and read the newspapers after closing their shops, while the peasants were at mass. From that time onward the citizens and the master artisans got into the habit of reading the newspapers; and a little while afterwards, they wanted to have a casino.

I remember that every one was talking of Benjamin Constant, and that great confidence was placed in him. Father Goulden thought highly of him, and as he had got into the habit of going out every evening to read, at Father Colin's, we thus heard the news. He would say to us, "The Duke of Angoulême is at Bordeaux, the Count of Artois is at Marseilles; they promise this; they have said that."

Catherine was more serious than I; she was fond of hearing news about the country, and when Father Goulden said anything, I could see in her eyes that she considered he was right. One evening he said to us, "The Duke of Berry is coming here."

We were very much astonished.

"What is he going to do here, Father Goulden?" asked Catherine.

"He is coming to review the regiment," he answered with a smile. "I am curious to see him. The papers say that he is like Buonaparte, but that he is much more clever. That's not to be wondered at in a legitimate prince; if he is not more clever than the son of a peasant, how unfortunate that would be! But you, Joseph, who know the other one, you will form an opinion."

It may be imagined how this news stirred up the country. From that day nothing was thought of but erecting triumphal arches and making white flags. All the villagers from the environs were to come on carts ornamented with garlands. A triumphal arch was erected at Phalsbourg, and another on the hill of Saverne. This took place at the end of the month of September. Every day Catherine and I, in the evening after supper, used to go and see how the triumphal arch was getting on. It was between the Ville de Metz Hotel and the house of the confectioner Durr's on the road. The old carpenter Ulrich and his boys were building it; it was like a great gate, which they covered with garlands of oak-leaves, and on the façades magnificent white flags were displayed.

While that work was being finished, Zebedee came to see us two or three times. The prince was to come by way of Metz. Letters were received by the regiment, letters which represented him as being as severe as though he had gained fifty battles.

But what vexed Zebedee more than anything was that the prince called our old officers, officers of fortune.

At last he arrived, on the 1st October, at six o'clock in the evening. They began firing when he was still on the Gerberhoff Bastion. He alighted at the Ville de Metz, without passing under the triumphal arch. The square was crowded with officers in full-dress uniform. From every window there were shouts of "Vive de Duc de Berry!" just as in Napoleon's time they used to cry, "Vive l'Empereur!"

Father Goulden, Catherine, and I could not get near, so great was the crowd; but we saw the carriages and the hussars. A sentry barred the road towards our house.

The same evening the duke received the corps of officers. He condescended to accept a dinner that the officers of the 6th offered him, but he only invited Colonel Zaepfel in return. After the dinner, which lasted till ten o'clock, the notables gave a ball in his honour at the college. All the officers, all the friends of the Bourbons, in black coats, with white silk knee-breeches and stockings, went there with the prince; and young ladies of good family, in white dresses, were to be found there in crowds. I seem still to hear, in the middle of the night, the horses of the cortège passing by, and the thousand cries of "Vive le roi! Vive le Duc de Berry!"

All the windows were illuminated, and before those of the governor of the town was to be seen a great sky-blue escutcheon; the crown and the three lilies shone upon it in the darkness. The music of the regiment echoed from the great hall of the college. Mademoiselle Brémer, who had a very fine voice, was to have sung to the prince the song of "Vive Henry Quatre!" But all the town knew the next morning that she had been so dazzled at the sight of the prince, that she had not been able to sing a single word, and everybody was repeating, "Poor Mademoiselle Felicité! poor Mademoiselle Felicité!"

The ball was prolonged all night. Father Goulden, Catherine, and I had been asleep for a long time when we were awakened about three o'clock in the morning by the hussars clattering by, and by cries of "Vive le Duc de Berry!" These princes must have good constitutions to go to all these balls and dinners that people offer them on their way. It must be very wearisome to them, especially after a time, when people call them "Your majesty," "Your dignity," "Your excellence," "Your grace," "Your worship," and, in fact, every extraordinary name they can invent to make them believe they adore them, and look

upon them as gods. Yes, if at last they despise men, it is not to be wondered at; if the world were to do the same to us, we too should at last think that we were eagles.

But what I have just related is the exact truth, and I have not said too much.

Next day it began again, as it were, with new enthusiasm. The weather was very fine; but as the prince had slept badly, and had been much wearied at seeing these citizens, who tried unsuccessfully to imitate the court, and perhaps because he thought that people did not cry, "Vive le roi! Vive le Duc de Berry!" enough (for the soldiers kept silence), he was in a very bad humour.

That day I saw him very well during the review at the side of the square; and Father Goulden, Catherine and I were at Witmann's, the currier's, on the first floor, and during the benediction of the flag, and the *Te Deum* in the church, we also saw him, for we occupied the fourth bench opposite the choir. They said that he was like Napoleon, but that was not true; he was a plain, short, stout man, with cheeks pale from fatigue, and not lively at all, but quite the contrary. During all the ceremony he did nothing but yawn and balance himself to and fro slowly, like a clock. I tell you what I saw myself; and that shows how blind people are, and how they want to discover likenesses everywhere.

During the review, I also remembered how the emperor used to come on horseback, and see at a glance if everything was in order; while the duke came towards the ranks on foot, and even reproved old soldiers once or twice, looking at them in a haughty way. That was the worst of all. He looked at Zebedee in that manner, and Zebedee never forgave him for it.

So much for the review. But a more serious thing was the distribution of crosses and fleur-de-lis. When I tell you that all the mayors, the deputies, the councillors of Baraques d'en Haut, and of Baraques des Bois-de-Chênes, of Holdesloh, and Hirschland received the decoration of the fleur-de-lis, because they marched at the head of their village with the white flag, and that Pinacle, because he had arrived first with the band of the Bohemian Waldteufel, which played "Vive Henry Quatre," and five or six other white flags, larger than all the rest, received the cross of the Legion of Honour—when I tell you that, you may imagine what respectable people thought. It was a complete scandal!

In the afternoon, about four o'clock, the prince departed

for Strasbourg, accompanied by all the royalists in the province, riding, some on good horses, and others, like Pinacle, on old hacks. They had prepared dinner for him in the direction of Saverne.

One thing that all the Phalsbourgians of that day still remember is that the prince was already in his caleche and was being driven slowly away, when an emigrant officer, bareheaded and in uniform, began running after it, crying out in a lamentable voice that was heard all over the place,—

"Bread, my prince! bread for my children!"

This made the people blush, and run away for shame.

We had returned to our own house in silence; Father Goulden seemed thoughtful, when Aunt Grethel arrived.

"Well, Mother Grethel," said he to her, "you ought to be pleased."

"And why?"

"Pinacle has got a decoration."

Then she turned quite green, and sat down; and after a few minutes she said, "That is the most disgraceful thing I ever heard of. But if the prince had known how worthless Pinacle is, M. Goulden, instead of giving him a cross, he would have had him hanged."

"That is just the trouble," answered Father Goulden. "Those people do so many things of this sort without knowing it; and when they comprehend what they have done, it will perhaps be too late."

## CHAPTER VIII

It was thus that Monseigneur the Duke of Berry visited the eastern departments; his most trifling words were reported far and wide; some were loud in praise of his infinite graces, and others were silent.

After that time, the idea occurred to me more than once that all these emigrants, all these half-pay officers, all these preachers, with their processions and their expiations, would upset everything before they had done; and some time after, at the beginning of winter, we knew that it was not only in our part, but far back in Alsace also, that affairs were being mismanaged in that way.

One morning, when Father Goulden and I were at work, between eleven and twelve o'clock, each thinking his own thoughts, and while Catherine was preparing the table, I went out to wash my hands at the pump, as I was accustomed to do before dinner. An old woman was wiping her feet on the straw mat at the foot of the stairs; she shook the mud from her skirts, in her hand she held a stick, and a large chaplet hung round her neck. As I looked down on her from the top of the stairs, she began to climb up; and I saw at once, from her little eyes with the crow's-feet round them, and her little mouth surrounded by numberless wrinkles, that it was Anna Marie, the pilgrim of Saint-Witt.

This poor old woman often brought us watches to repair, for pious persons who put confidence in her, and Father Goulden was always glad to see her.

"Ah!" he cried, "it is Anna Marie; let us have a good pinch of snuff together. And how is M. the Curé so-and-so? and how is M. the Vicar so-and-so? Does he always retain his good looks? And M. Jacob of such-and-such a place? and the old Sacristan Niclausse? Does he ring the bells still at Dann, at Hirschland, and at Saint-Jean? He must be getting very old."

"Ah, Monsieur Goulden, thank you for M. Jacob; you knew that he lost Mademoiselle Christine last year."

"What, what? Mademoiselle Christine?"

"Yes, mon Dieu!"

"What a misfortune! Well, we must remember that we are all mortal."

"Yes, Monsieur Goulden; and then, one has the benefit of receiving the holy consolations of the church."

"Certainly, certainly; that's the great thing."

In that way they used to talk, and Father Goulden laughed quietly to himself. He knew everything that happened in the sacristy for six leagues round the town. From time to time he would give me a sly look. I had seen him look so a hundred times during my apprenticeship; but it will be understood that, on this day, Father Goulden was more anxious than usual to learn what was going on in the country.

"Ah, it is Anna Marie!" said he, rising; "why, how long is it since we saw you last?"

"Three months, Monsieur Goulden, three long months; I have been making pilgrimages to Saint-Witt, to Saint-Odille, to Marienthal, and to Haslach. I had vows to pay to all the saints in Alsace, in Lorraine, and in the Vosges. At last, I have almost got through; I have only Saint-Quirin to do now."

"Ah, so much the better—your affairs are going well. I'm glad to hear it. Sit down, Anna Marie, and rest."

I could see in his eyes how pleased he was to make the old woman tell her story. But it appeared that Anna Marie had business elsewhere.

"Ah, Monsieur Goulden!" said she, "I cannot to-day, for the others are before me; I mean Mother Ewig, Gaspard Rosenkrantz, and Jacob Heilig. I must get as far as Saint-Quirin this evening, and I only called in to tell you that the clock at Dosenheim is out of order, and they want you to repair it."

"Bah! Bah! You must rest a little while."

"No, I cannot; I am very sorry, Monsieur Goulden; but I must finish my tour."

She had already taken up her parcel, and Father Goulden looked quite annoyed; when Catherine, who was putting the great dish of cabbage on the table, said, "What, you talk of going away, Anna Marie? What are you thinking of? Here is your plate ready for you."

Then the old woman turned her head, and saw the great smoking soup-tureen, and the cabbages, which emitted a savoury odour all round.

"I am in a great hurry," she said doubtfully.

"Bah, you've good legs," retorted Catherine, with a merry glance towards Father Goulden.

"Oh, for that, by God's mercy, my limbs are sound enough."

"Very well, then, sit down, and renew your strength a little; it is a hard occupation to be always walking."

"Yes, Madame Bertha, certainly; the thirty sous one gets are hardly earned, I can tell you."

I arranged the chairs, and said, "Come, sit down, Anna Marie, and give me your stick."

"I must do as you wish," she replied; "but I must not stay long; I will only eat a mouthful, and then I must go."

"Yes, yes, that is understood, Anna Marie," said Monsieur Goulden; "you shall not be detained long."

We had taken our places, and Father Goulden began to serve the dinner. Catherine glanced at me with a smile, and I said to myself, "The women are cleverer than we, after all."

I felt very glad. What can a man wish for better than to have a clever wife? She is a real treasure; and I have often noticed that men are very happy who let themselves be led by wives of that kind.

It may be imagined that when she was once at table, near a good stove, instead of being in the open air, with her feet in the mud, and feeling the November wind whistling through her skirts, it will well be believed, I say, that Anna Marie abandoned the idea of setting out immediately. She was a good creature, and at the age of sixty-five years she still supported two little children of her son's, who had died some years before. And when one has to travel the country at that age, to suffer from the wind, and the rain, and the snow on one's back, to sleep in barns and stables on straw, and to eat nothing but potatoes three days out of four, and not always as many as one would like—all this is not likely to make one despise a good dish of hot soup, a good piece of smoked bacon, with good cabbage, and two or three glasses of wine to warm one's heart! No, one must look at things as they are; the life of these poor people is a very sad one, and every one would do well to go on a pilgrimage on his own account.

It was evident that Anna Marie understood the difference between being at table and being on the road; she ate with a good appetite, and seemed quite to take pleasure in telling us all she had heard during her last journey.

"Yes, everything is going on well now," she said; "all these processions and expiations that you have seen are nothing

yet; they must increase from day to day. And you must know that there are missionaries coming among us, as they used to go among savages in the old times, to convert us, and that they must come from M. de Forbin-Janson and M. de Rauzan, because the corruption of the time is too great. And they are going to rebuild the convents again, everywhere, and the gates are to be put back on the roads, just as before the rebellion of five-and-twenty years ago! And when the pilgrims arrive at the gates of the convents, as soon as they ring, the doors will be opened to them directly; the lay brother will bring them bowls of thick soup, with meat in it, on ordinary days, and bowls of vegetable soup, with fish on Fridays and Saturdays, and every day in Lent. In that way piety will increase, and everybody will want to be a pilgrim. But the religious ladies of Bischofsheim have said that only the old pilgrims, who had been such from father to son, will be allowed to go on pilgrimages, because every one is to remain in his station; the peasants are to be attached to the soil, and the seigneurs are to have their châteaux back to govern them. I have heard these things myself, with my own ears, from the religious ladies, who are to have their dowries back again, because they have come back from exile, and they must have their dowries back to build up the chapels again; that is very sure.

" Ah, good Lord, if it were only done, and I could have the benefit of it in my old age! I have been fasting a long time now, and my granddaughters too. I shall take them with me, I shall teach them prayers, and I shall have the consolation, at my death, to leave them a good profession."

When we heard her tell these things, though contrary to common-sense, we were still quite moved, because she wept with pleasure, in advance, at the thought of seeing her grandchildren begging at the gates of convents, and the lay brother bringing out soup to them.

" And you must know also," she said, " that M. de Rauzan and the Reverend Father Tarin desire that the châteaux shall be rebuilt; and that the forests, the meadows, and the fields are to be given up to the nobles, and that all the old ponds are to be filled with water again, because the ponds belong to the reverend fathers, who have not time to plough, to sow, and to reap; everything must come to them without labour."

" But tell me, Anna Marie," said Father Goulden, " is all this quite certain that you are telling me? I can hardly believe that such great happiness is reserved for us."

"It is perfectly sure, Monsieur Goulden," she replied. "Monsieur the Count d'Artois desires salvation, and in order that he may be saved all must be put back into its right order. At Marienthal Monsieur the Vicar Antoine told us the same things again last week. They are things, you see, that come from above. Only one must still have a little patience; the hearts of the people must grow accustomed to these things by preaching and expiations. Those who will not accustom themselves to them, like the Jews and the Lutherans, will be compelled. And the Jacobins—"

When she mentioned the Jacobins, Anna Marie all at once looked at Father Goulden, and turned red to the ears; but she recovered herself, for he was smiling.

"Among the Jacobins," she then said, "there are certainly some very good people. But the poor must live for all that. The Jacobins took the property of the poor away, and that is not right."

"But where did they take the poor people's property from, Anna Marie?"

"Listen, Monsieur Goulden. The monks and the capuchins had the poor people's property, and the Jacobins divided it all amongst themselves."

"Ah, I understand, I understand," said Father Goulden. "The monks and the capuchins had your property, Anna Marie. Now I should never have guessed that."

Father Goulden continued to smile; and Anna Marie said, "I knew very well that we should agree in the end."

"Yes, yes, we agree," said he kindly.

I listened without saying anything, being naturally curious to hear what was going to happen to us. It was easy to see that Anna Marie was reporting to us what she had heard during her last journey.

She also said that miracles were going to begin again; that St. Quirin, St. Odille, and the rest would not work miracles under the usurper; but that now the miracles were already beginning again; for that the little black statue of St. John, at Kortzeroth, when it saw the old prior come back from exile, had actually shed tears.

"Yes, yes, I understand," said Father Goulden; "that does not surprise me; after the expiations and processions, the saints must certainly work miracles too; that is nothing but natural, Anna Marie, nothing but natural."

"Certainly, Monsieur Goulden; and when people see the miracles their faith will return."

"That is clear, that is clear."

Dinner was over by this time. Anna Marie, seeing that nothing more appeared, remembered that she was behind time, and remarked, "Good Heavens, there is one o'clock striking; and the others must be almost at Eschweiller by this time. I must bid you farewell now."

She had got up, and seized her stick with an important air.

"Well, a good journey to you, Anna Marie," said Father Goulden; "and don't let us wait so long to see you again."

"Ah, Monsieur Goulden," she said, at the door, "it is not my fault that I don't sit at your table every day."

She laughed, and added, as she took up her parcel, "Good-bye till we meet again; and for the good you have done me I will pray to the blessed St. Quirinus to send you a big boy, as red and fresh as a pippin. You see, Madame Bertha, that's all a poor old woman like me can do."

When I heard these kindly words, I said to myself, "This poor old Anna Marie is a good soul, after all. What she has been talking about is just what I desire most in the whole world. May Heaven hear her!"

I was quite moved by this good wish. Then she went downstairs, and when we heard her shutting the door below behind her, Catherine began laughing and said, "This time she has unloaded her basket well."

"Yes, my children," replied Father Goulden, who looked quite pensive; "that is what may be called human ignorance. One would think that poor old creature invented all this; unfortunately she hears it all, right and left; it is word for word what the emigrants think, and what their journals are repeating day by day, and what the preachers are preaching openly in all the churches. Louis XVIII. is in their way; he has too much good sense to please them; their real king is Monseigneur the Count of Artois, who wants to be saved; and in order that monseigneur may do that, it is necessary that everything should be put back into the state it was in before the rebellion of five-and-twenty years ago. It is requisite that the national lands should be restored to their old proprietors; it is necessary that the nobility shall have their privileges, as in 1788, and shall secure all grades of command in the army; it is necessary that the Catholic and Apostolic Roman Faith shall be the only religion in the state; Sundays and saints' days must be observed; the heretics must be driven from all offices, and that the priests alone give instruction to the children of

the people; it is necessary that this great and terrible nation, which for five-and-twenty years has carried its ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity, through all the world, by means of good sense and of victories, and which would never have been vanquished if the emperor had not made an alliance with the kings at Tilsit; it is necessary that this nation, which in a few years has produced as many great captains, orators, learned men and geniuses of all kinds, as the noble families have produced in two thousand years, should give up everything, and be made to dig the earth again; while the others, who are not one to a thousand of the people, aggrandise themselves from generation to generation, and live comfortable lives at the people's expense! Oh, most certainly, the fields and meadows and ponds will be given up, as Anna Marie has said, and the people will build up the châteaux again, and the convents; there can be no doubt about that; to be agreeable to M. the Count of Artois, and help him to carry out his intentions, that is the best the people can do—and such a great prince too!"

Then Father Goulden clasped his hands and looked at the ceiling, and said, "Blessed Heaven! that has caused the little black St. John of Kortzeroth to work so many miracles, if you could but make one single ray of common sense enter the heads of monseigneur and his friends, I think this would be finer still than the tears of the little saint! And that other man yonder in his island, with his clear eyes, he is like a hawk, pretending to sleep, while he sees geese dabbling about in the mud. Why, mon Dieu, five or six beats of his wings would bring him upon them; the geese will fly away, but we shall have all Europe upon our shoulders once more."

He said these words with a grave air, and I looked at Catherine, not knowing whether to laugh or cry. Suddenly he sat down and said, "Come, Joseph, all this is not cheerful; but what are we to do? It is time to resume our work again. Just look and see what is the matter with M. le Curé Jacob's watch."

Then Catherine took away the cloth, and we settled to work again.

## CHAPTER IX

The winter had come. It was a rainy winter, with intervals of snow and wind. In those days, the roofs were not yet provided with gutters; the rain used to drop from the tiles, and the wind blew it into the middle of the streets. The splashing was heard all day long, while the stove hummed, and Catherine moved about around us, attending to the fire, occasionally lifting up the covers of the saucepans, and at intervals singing in a low voice as she sat at her wheel. Father Goulden and I had become so accustomed to this kind of life, that our work was done, so to speak, without our thinking of it. We had nothing to disturb ourselves about. The table was always laid, and the dinner served, at twelve o'clock precisely. It was real family life.

In the evening, Father Goulden used to go out after supper, to read the papers at Hoffmann's Café, with his old cloak well drawn up over his shoulders, and his great fox-skin cap drawn down over his ears. In spite of these precautions, sometimes, after ten o'clock at night, when we were already in bed, we heard him come back coughing, when he had got his feet wet. Then Catherine said to me, "He is coughing now; he thinks himself as young as when he was twenty years old."

And in the morning she did not hesitate to reproach him.

"Father Goulden," she would say, "you are not prudent. You have a bad cold, and you go out every evening."

"What would you have, my child?" he would answer. "I've got into the habit of reading the newspapers now; the habit has got too strong for me. I always want to know what Benjamin Constant and the rest of them say. It is like a second life to me, and often I think, 'They might have mentioned this thing or that. If Melchior Goulden had been there, he would have enlarged on such and such a subject, and that could not have failed to produce a great effect.'"

Then he would shake his head, and laugh, as he said, "Every one thinks he has more sense and is more clever than other people; but I am always pleased with Benjamin Constant."

We did not know what to answer, for his love for the newspaper was too great. But one day Catherine said to him,

" Father Goulden, if you want to hear the news now, that is no reason why you should make yourself ill. Why don't you do like the old carpenter Carabin? He made an arrangement last week with Father Hoffmann, who sends him the newspaper after seven o'clock, when the others have read it, for payment of three francs a month. In this way, without giving himself any trouble, Carabin knows all that is going on, and his wife, old Bebel, too; they talk over these matters between themselves, in the chimney corner, and argue together about them; and that's what you ought to do."

" Well, do you know, Catherine, that is a famous idea," said Father Goulden. " But, you see—three francs! "

" The three francs are nothing," I exclaimed; " the chief thing is, not to get ill. You cough every evening like an invalid, and this must not go on."

These words, far from vexing him, pleased him; for he saw that we spoke from affection for him, and that he ought to listen to us.

" Very well," he said, " we will try to arrange matters as you wish. I am the more ready, because a crowd of officers on half-pay fills the café from morning till night, passing the paper about to each other, so that one sometimes has to wait two hours before one can get it. Yes, Catherine is right."

And that very day he went to see Father Hoffmann about it; and the end was that Michel, one of the waiters at the café, used to bring us the paper every evening after seven o'clock, just as we arose from table. When we heard him coming upstairs it was a real pleasure to us; and we all said, " Here comes the paper! "

Then we would get up from the table. Catherine hastened to take away the cloth, and put everything in order; I would put a good large log on the fire; Catherine knitted, I smoked my pipe like an old soldier, watching the flame dancing in the stove; and Father Goulden used to read us the news from Paris. No one can imagine how glad we were to find Benjamin Constant and two or three others upholding what we ourselves thought to be right. Sometimes Father Goulden was obliged to pause to wipe his spectacles, and then Catherine would say, " How well those people speak! Those are what one may call sensible men! Yes, what they maintain is just—it's the pure truth! "

Both of us approved. Father Goulden only used to think that this or that subject might have been mentioned, but that what was said was good. Then he would continue his reading,

which lasted till ten o'clock; and then we would go to bed, thinking of what we had heard.

Outside, the wind whistled as it does at Phalsbourg; the weathercocks turned creaking in their sockets, and the rain beat against the walls; and we, warm and comfortable, listened to it, thanking heaven for our shelter, till sleep came and made us forget everything. Ah, how sweetly one sleeps, and how happy one is, when the mind is at rest, and one has strength and health, and the love and respect of those whom one loves. What can one wish for more in this world? Days, weeks, and months passed away in this manner; we became in a certain way politicians; and when the ministers were going to speak, we used to think beforehand, "Ah! the rascals, they are going to deceive us; ah! the bad race—they ought all to be driven away."

Catherine especially could not endure these people; and when Mother Grethel came and spoke to us as she formerly did about our good King Louis XVIII., we used to listen out of respect for her, but we pitied her for being so blind concerning the affairs of the country.

It must be remarked, moreover, that these emigrants, ministers, and princes behaved towards us in a really insolent manner. If M. the Count of Artois and his sons had put themselves at the head of the Vendeans and Bretons, if they had marched upon Paris and gained the victory, they would have had a right to say to us, "We are your masters, and we lay down the law for you." But to have been driven away in the first instance, and then to have been brought back by the Prussians and the Russians, and then to try and humiliate us, that was a very disagreeable thing! The older I grow the more certain I feel of that; it was shameful!

Zebedee, too, used to come and see us from time to time, and he knew everything we read in the paper. He it was who first told us how some young emigrants had driven General Vandamme from the presence of the king. That old soldier, who had come home from a Russian prison, and whom all the army respected, in spite of his misfortune at Kulm, had been driven out by them. They told him that was no place for him. Vandamme had been colonel of a regiment quartered at Phalsbourg; all the town knew him; and no one can describe the indignation the honest people felt at this news.

It was Zebedee, too, who told us that lawsuits were being carried on against the half-pay officers, and that their letters

were stolen in the post-office, to try and make them appear as traitors. A little while afterwards he told us that the officers' daughters at the school of St. Denis were to be sent away with a pension of two hundred francs each; and afterwards, that the *emigrés* wanted to have the sole right of sending their sons to the schools of St. Cyr and La Flèche, whence they were to emerge as officers; while the people were to remain ordinary soldiers at a sou a day for evermore.

The *Gazette* told the same tale, but Zebedee knew many details; every one of the soldiers knew all about it. I could never describe to you Zebedee's face, as he sat by the stove, with his black short pipe in his mouth, telling us these abominations; his great nose used to grow quite white, the lids twitched at the corners of his light grey eyes, and from time to time he would try to laugh, muttering, "So it goes on! so it goes on!"

"And what do the other soldiers think of all this?" asked Father Goulden.

"Oh, they think it's all going well. When one has spilt one's blood for France during twenty years—when one has seen ten, fifteen, or twenty campaigns, has got three stripes and is covered with wounds, it's a cheerful thing, Father Goulden, to hear that one's old chiefs are being sent away, that their daughters are being turned out, and that the sons of those men are going to be officers for ever." And as he said this, his whole face trembled.

"Certainly, certainly, it is unfortunate," said Father Goulden, "but discipline must always be maintained; the marshals obey the ministers, the officers obey the marshals, and the soldiers the officers."

"You are right," answered Zebedee. "But they are beating the tattoo."

And then he would shake hands with us, and run off hastily to the barracks.

Thus the whole winter passed away. The indignation became greater from day to day. The town was full of half-pay officers who dared no longer stay in Paris—lieutenants, captains, commanders, colonels of all the infantry, and cavalry; people who lived on a small glass of cognac and a crust of bread, and who were the more unhappy inasmuch as they had to keep up appearances. Imagine men of this kind, with hollow cheeks, close-cut hair, their eyes flashing, with their great moustaches, and their old regulation greatcoats, the buttons of which they had been obliged to change. Fancy them walking about three

or six, or ten in a group, on the great square, with great sword-sticks hanging from their button-holes, and their great cocked hats set square across their shoulders, always well brushed, but so worn and shabby that you felt sure they could not have a quarter enough to eat. Still you could not help saying to yourself, "These are the victors of Jemmapes, Fleurus, Zurick, Hohenlinden, Marengo, Austerlitz, Friedland, and Wagram; if we are proud of being Frenchmen, it is not the Count of Artois or the Dukes of Berry or of Angoulême who can boast of being the cause of our pride, but these men themselves. And now they are left to die, and even bread is refused them, while emigrants are put in their places. It's really an abomination." It was not necessary to have much good sense, or kindness, or justice to see that this was against nature.

For my part, I could not bear to see these wretched people; it made my heart ache. When a man has served, if it be only for six months, the feeling of respect for his old chiefs, for those whom he has seen in the front under fire, always remains with him. I was ashamed of my country for allowing such scandalous things to be done.

One thing I shall never forget. At the end of the month of January 1815, two of these half-pay officers, one of them tall and thin, his head already grey, known by the name of Colonel Falconette, and who seemed to have served in the infantry; the other short and thick-set, who was called Commandant Margarot, and still wore his whiskers after the manner of hussars. These two came and offered to sell us a superb watch. It was about ten o'clock in the morning. I think I see them now, entering gravely, the colonel in his high collar, and the other with his head sunk deep between his shoulders. Their watch was a gold one, in a double case, a repeater; it marked the seconds, and only required winding up once a week. I had never seen one so beautiful. As Father Goulden was examining it, I turned round on my chair, and looked at the two men, who seemed terribly in want of money; the hussar especially, with his brown lean face, his broad shoulders, and his long arms hanging down by his sides, inspired me with profound respect. I thought, "When that man held his hussar's sabre with that long arm stretched out, he could reach far; his little eyes must have flashed under his thick eyebrows; he could cut and thrust like lightning." I pictured him to myself in a charge, half-hidden behind the head of his horse, with his point well forward, and my admiration for him increased still more.

I then suddenly remembered that Commandant Margarot and Colonel Falconette had killed Austrian and Russian officers in duels behind the summer-house, and that all the town had been talking of them five months before, when the allies passed through. And then the tall colonel, with no shirt-collar round his neck, thin, quiet, and pale as he looked, with his grey hair and cold manner, seemed to me also worthy of respect.

I waited to hear what Father Goulden would say about their watch. He kept his eyes fixed upon it with a profound admiration, while the two men waited with a quiet look, but still with the appearance of being uncomfortable, and unable to hide their embarrassment.

At last Father Goulden said, "This, gentlemen, is a beautiful piece of workmanship; it is what one would call a watch for a prince."

"Undoubtedly," replied the hussar; "and it is from a prince that I received it, after the battle of Rabbe."

He looked at the other, who said nothing.

Then Father Goulden, looking more attentively at them, saw that they were in great distress. He took off his black silk cap, and slowly rose, saying, "Gentlemen, pray do not be offended at what I am going to say, for I am, like yourselves, an old soldier. I have served France under the republic, and I can understand that it must rend one's heart to be obliged to sell an object of this kind, an article that reminds us of a fine action in our life, and recalls the memory of a chief who is dear to us."

I had never heard Father Goulden speak with so much emotion. He stood with his bald head bent down in a mournful way, and his eyes fixed on the ground, as if to avoid seeing the sorrow of those to whom he spoke. The commandant had turned quite red, his little eyes seemed to be troubled, and his great fingers twitched; the colonel had become as pale as death. I should have liked to go away.

Father Goulden continued, "This watch is worth more than a thousand francs. I have not this sum in hand at present, and, moreover, I should be very sorry to deprive you of such a souvenir. This is the offer I therefore make you. If you desire, the watch shall remain in my shop; it will be yours, and I will advance you two hundred francs, which you can return to me when you come to take it away."

On hearing this the hussar stretched out his great hairy hands, as if he would have embraced Father Goulden.

"You are a good patriot!" he cried out. "Colin told us so! Ah, monsieur, I shall never forget the service you are doing me! That watch—I received it from Prince Eugene for a daring act, and I value it like my own life-blood! But poverty—"

"Commandant!" cried the other, with a white face.

But the hussar would not listen to him; he put him aside with his hand and went on, "No, colonel, let me speak—we are among ourselves; an old soldier may hear me. They are starving us!—they are treating us like Cossacks!—only they are too cowardly to shoot us!"

His voice rang through the whole house. As for me, I ran into the kitchen with Catherine to escape the sad sight. Father Goulden tried to pacify him, and we listened.

"Yes, I know all that, gentlemen," he said; "I can put myself in your position."

"Come, Margarot, be calm," said the colonel.

The voices continued for a quarter of an hour. At last we heard Father Goulden count the money, and the hussar said to him, "Thank you, monsieur—thank you! If ever occasion should arise, remember Commandant Margarot!"

Then the door opened, and they went downstairs, for which Catherine and I were glad, because our hearts ached. We went back into the room. Father Goulden, who had been showing the officers downstairs, came up again almost directly, bare-headed. He was quite embarrassed.

"Those unhappy people are right," he said, as he put on his cap; "the conduct of the government towards them is horrible; but these things will have to be paid for, sooner or later."

All the rest of the day we felt sad. Father Goulden explained to me the beauties of the watch, and told me that one ought always to have such models before one's eyes; then we hung the watch up on our shelf.

From that moment the idea would not leave me that this would end badly, and that even if they stopped now, the emigrants had already gone too far. I seemed continually to hear the voice of the commandant in our room, crying out that people were behaving to the army like Cossacks. The recollection of the processions, the expiations, the preachings about the rebellion of twenty-five years, and of the restitution of the national property, the re-establishment of the convents, and all the rest, seemed to me a terrible muddle out of which nothing good could come.

## CHAPTER X

This was the state of affairs, when, at the beginning of the month of March, the report came along like a whirlwind that the emperor had landed at Cannes. Whence did this report come? No one has ever been able to say. Phalsbourg is two hundred leagues distant from the sea; many plains and many mountains separate it from the south. I myself remember an extraordinary circumstance.

On the 5th of March, on getting up, I had pushed open the window of our little room, which opened out from the roof. I looked in front of me at the black chimneys of Baker Spitz, behind them a little snow still clung; the cold was sharp, but still the sun shone, and I thought, "That is what I call fine weather for marching!" I remembered how glad we used to be in Germany, after we had put out our fires at dawn of day, to start in such weather as this, our muskets on our shoulders, and to hear the tramp of the men's boots on the hardened earth. And I know not how it was, but all at once the thought of the emperor came into my head; I saw him before me with his grey capote, his round back, his hat pressed down low over his forehead, marching along, with the Old Guard behind him. Catherine was sweeping out our room. It was as a dream, in that clear, cool weather.

While I stood there, we heard some one coming upstairs, and Catherine, standing still, said, "That is Father Goulden."

Immediately I recognised Father Goulden's footsteps; to my great surprise, for he hardly ever came up into our room. He opened the door, and said to us, quietly, "My children, the emperor landed at Cannes, near Toulon, on the first of March; and he is marching on Paris."

He said no more, but sat down to get breath. You may imagine how we looked at each other. After a minute's pause, Catherine said, "Is it in the paper, Father Goulden?"

"No," he replied; "they know nothing about it yet over yonder, or perhaps they are hiding it all from us. But, in Heaven's name, not a word of all this, for we should be arrested! This morning, Zebedee, who has been mounting guard at the French Gate, came about five o'clock to bring me the news.

He knocked at the door below, and no doubt you heard him."

"No, Father Goulden, we were asleep."

"Well, I opened the window to see what it was, and went down to undo the bolt. Zebedee told me of the matter as a certainty; and his regiment is confined to barracks until further orders. It seems that they are afraid of the soldiers; but if so, how are they to stop Buonaparte? They cannot send the peasants against him, whose land they want to take away, nor the townspeople, whom they have been treating like Jacobins. Now here is a good opportunity for the emigrants to distinguish themselves. But above all things, keep silence about all this—the greatest silence!"

He lifted up his hand as he said this, and we went down into the workshop. Catherine made a good fire, and we all went about our ordinary work.

That day all remained quiet, and the next day also. Some neighbours, Father Réboc and old Offran, came to see us, under the pretext of bringing their watches to be cleaned.

"Anything new, neighbour?" they asked.

"Mon Dieu! Things are keeping quiet," Father Goulden replied. "Do you know of anything new?"

"No."

And yet one could see by their faces that the great news had reached them. Zebedee remained at the barracks. The half-pay officers crowded the café from morning to night, but not a word transpired; the news was too serious.

At last, on the third day, the half-pay officers, who were bubbling with excitement, began to lose patience; they might be seen going to and fro, and you only had to look at their faces to see how terribly anxious they were. If they had had horses, or even weapons, I feel sure they would have attempted something; but the gendarmerie, with old Chancel at their head, were also going about; every hour a gendarme rode off as express messenger to Sarrebourg.

The agitation increased; nobody cared to work. Soon the report was spread by some commercial travellers who had arrived at the Ville de Bâle, that the Upper Rhine and the Jura were in revolt; that regiments of cavalry and infantry were moving on, one after another, in the direction of Besançon; that masses of troops were marching to meet the usurper, etc. One of these travellers, who talked too much, received an order to leave the town instantly; and the brigadier inspected his papers, which, fortunately for him, were in order.

I have seen other revolutions since then, but never such an agitation as this; especially on the 8th of March, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, when the order came for the first and second battalions to set out at once, in full marching order, for Lons-le-Saulmier. Then the whole extent of the danger was understood, and everbody thought, "It will not be the Duke d'Angoulême or the Duke de Berry who will stop Buonaparte, but it must be all Europe."

But the half-pay officers seemed to breathe more freely, and their faces were illumined as with a ray of sunshine.

At five o'clock, when the first roll of drums was sounding from the square, Zebedee came in in a hurry.

"Well?" Father Goulden called out to him.

"Well," he replied, "the first two battalions are going."

He looked quite pale.

"They are sent to arrest him," said Father Goulden.

"Oh, yes, they will be sure to arrest him," answered Zebedee, winking.

The rolling of the drums continued.

He turned and ran downstairs again, four steps at a time. I followed. Below, with his foot already on the threshold, he took hold of my arm, and raised his shako from his head, and said, "Look inside, Joseph—do you know it again?"

Inside the shako I saw the old tricolour cockade.

"It is ours, that one is," said he. "Well, each of the soldiers has got one."

I had only time for one look at it, when he pressed my hand and ran round the corner of the Rue de Fouquet. I went upstairs again, and said to myself, "Here is the old turmoil beginning again, and Europe set on fire; there will be the conscription, Joseph, and all permits rescinded, and so on, as they say in the papers. Instead of living peacefully, we shall have to turn out; instead of listening to church bells, we shall listen to guns; instead of talking of convents, they will have to talk about rascals; instead of smelling incense and garlands, people will have to smell powder. Good heavens! will this ever end? Everything might go on so well if it were not for the missionaries and the emigrants. What misery! what misery! And it is always we who pay. It is always for our good that these unjust things are done, while they make a mockery of us, and treat us as if we were merely logs of wood!"

Many other thoughts passed through my head; but what

was the use of it? I was not the Count of Artois or the Duke de Berry; a man must be a prince for his ideas to be worth anything—and then, indeed, every word he speaks is regarded as a miracle.

From that moment until night Father Goulden could not keep quiet a minute; he was as restless as I had been while I was awaiting the permission to marry; every moment he was looking out of window, and saying, "To-day the great news will come—the orders have been given. There is no need to conceal anything from us now."

And then he would cry out every minute, "Hush! here comes the mail."

We listened, but it was only a cart or a waggon passing jingling over the bridge.

Night had come, and Catherine had laid the cloth when, for the twentieth time, Father Goulden cried out, "Listen!"

This time a distant rumbling could be heard on the outworks. Then, without waiting longer, Father Goulden ran into the passage, and put on his big overcoat, crying out, "Come along, Joseph."

He seemed to roll down the stairs in his hurry, and when I saw him so excited, the idea of hearing this news excited me too, and I ran after him. We had hardly got down the steps into the street before we saw the mail-coach emerging from under the dark gates with its two red lamps; and presently it came rattling past us like thunder. We ran on, and we were not alone; on all sides people were rushing onward, and crying, "There it is! there it is!"

The post-office was in the Rue des Foins, near the German Gate; the mail-coach came down straight to the corner of the College, and then turned off to the right. The farther we ran the more did the street become crowded with people; they came rushing out of every door; the former mayor, Monsieur Parmentier, his secretary Eschbach, the inspector Cauchois, and many other notables were running too, calling to each other and crying, "Now is the great moment!"

When we came to the turning by the Place d'Armes, we saw a crowd already standing in front of the post-office, and innumerable figures leaning over the iron railings, listening, reaching forward over each other's heads, and questioning the courier, who did not reply.

The postmaster, M. Pernette, opened the window that was lighted from within; the packet of letters and newspapers flew

from the top of the coach into his room; the window was closed again, and a few strokes from the postillion's whip persuaded the crowd to stand aside.

"The newspapers! the newspapers!"

Nothing but that was heard on all sides. The mail-coach started again, and quickly disappeared under the German Gate.

"Let us go to Hoffmann's Café," said Father Goulden to me. "Let us make haste; the papers will be there directly; and if we delay, it will be impossible to get in."

As we crossed the square, we heard people already running behind us. I heard the clear voice of Commandant Margarot crying, "Come on; I have them."

All the half-pay officers were following him in a body; the moon was shining; one could see them coming along rapidly. We made the best of our way into the café, and hardly were we seated in front of the great earthenware stove, when the crowd came rushing in at both the doors.

The faces of the half-pay officers at that moment were worth seeing! In their great cocked hats, they swarmed in under the lamps; with their haggard features, their drooping moustaches, their gleaming eyes flashing and staring in the shadow, making them look like savage creatures hovering about their prey. Some of them glared with impatience and excitement; and I believe they did not see anything in front of them, for in spirit they were far away with Buonaparte. It was terrible!

The people continually kept coming in, so that the place was quite stifling, and they were obliged to open the windows. Outside, the streets leading to the cavalry barracks and the Place de la Fontaine were full of noise.

"We did well to come on directly," said Father Goulden to me, as he stood upright on his chair, with his hand resting on the great stove; for many others had got up in the same way.

I followed his example; and then I could see all around me nothing but attentive heads, the great hats of the officers in the middle of the room, and the crowd waiting on the square without, in the moonlight. The tumult redoubled. Then a voice cried, "Silence!"

It was Commandant Margarot, who had just mounted on a table. Behind him, under the double door, stood the gendarmes Keltz and Werner, looking on; and outside all the open windows, people were leaning and looking in. There was a general cry of

"Silence! silence!" And then the stillness became so profound that one would have thought no soul was present.

The commandant read the paper aloud. His clear voice, which pronounced every word with a sort of internal tremor, reminded me of the ticking of our clock in the silence of night; it must have been heard as far as the middle of the great square. And that went on a long time; for the commandant read the whole report, without passing over any part of it. I remember that the *Gazette* began by stating how the man named Buonaparte, the enemy of the public good, who during fifteen years had kept France in the servitude of despotism, had escaped from his island, and that he had had the audacity to set foot in a land inundated with blood through his fault; but that the troops, faithful to the king and faithful to the nation, were on their way to arrest him, and that, perceiving the general horror he had excited, Buonaparte had betaken himself to the mountains with the few traitors who accompanied him, that he was surrounded on all sides, and must inevitably be taken prisoner.

I also remember that, according to this report, all the marshals had hastened to put their glorious swords at the service of the king, the father of the people, and of the nation; and that the illustrious Marshal Ney, Prince of the Moskowa, had kissed his hand, and promised to bring Buonaparte to Paris, dead or alive.

After that came some Latin words, which I did not understand, and which had no doubt been inserted for the curés.

From time to time I could hear people behind me laughing and jeering at the *Gazette*. On turning my head, I perceived that those who jeered were Professor Burguet and two or three other notables, who, after the Hundred Days, were arrested, and compelled to live at Bourges, because, as Father Goulden said, they were too clear-headed. Which shows that it is much better to keep silence on such occasions, when one does not want to fight on either side; for words do not make it hot or cold, and only make things disagreeable for one.

But a much stronger thing was coming, when the commandant began to read the ordinances. The first spoke of the movements of the troops, the second ordered all Frenchmen to go out against Buonaparte, to arrest him, and to deliver him up dead or alive, because he had put himself outside the law. At this moment the commandant, who until now had only laughed at intervals, as he pronounced the name of Buonaparte, and whose long face, lighted up by the lamp under which he stood, had

only twitched slightly now and then, as the others stood around listening to him—at this moment, his whole countenance changed. I had never seen such a terrible face; his little eyes glittered like those of a cat, and his moustache and whiskers bristled up. He took the paper and tore it into a thousand pieces; then he turned quite pale; and, standing upright, with his long arms stretched out and raised above his head, shouted, "Vive l'Empereur!" in a voice that made one shudder. The moment he uttered this cry, all the half-pay officers raised their great hats, some in their hands, others at the end of their sword-sticks, and all cried with one voice, "Vive l'Empereur!" There was such a shout, you would have thought the roof was falling. As for me, I felt as if cold water had been poured down my back. "Now, all is finished," I said to myself. "What is the use of preaching the love of peace to people like those?" Outside, amid the groups of citizens, the soldiers belonging to the military post at the Hotel de Ville, repeated the cry, "Vive l'Empereur!" And when I looked round, much frightened to see what the gendarmes would say to it, I saw that they were retiring without saying anything at all, for they were old soldiers themselves.

But all was not over yet; when the commandant prepared to come down from his table, an officer cried out that he should be borne in triumph; and in a moment some others took him by the legs and carried him round the hall, pushing the people aside before them, and shouting like madmen, "Vive l'Empereur!" As for him, as he sat with his great heavy hands grasping their shoulders, his head appearing above their hats, when he found himself being carried in triumph by his comrades, and heard them repeating the shout he loved above all others, he began to weep. One could never have thought that such a face as his could have cried; that alone was enough to make one feel upset and tremble. He said nothing; his eyes were closed; and the tears ran down his haggard cheeks, over his moustache.

I was staring at him, as you may suppose, when Father Goulden pulled me by the sleeve; he had got down from his chair, and said to me, "Joseph, let us go, let us go; it is time."

Behind us the room was already empty, for everybody had made haste to get out by the lane that led to Klein's brewery, for fear of being entangled in a bad affair; we went out the same way.

"The chances are that this will take a bad turn," said Father Goulden, as we crossed the square together. "To-

morrow the gendarmes might begin the campaign. Commandant Margarot and his companions are not the sort of men to let themselves be arrested; the soldiers of the 3rd Battalion will take their part, if they have not done so already; the town is in their hands."

He uttered these thoughts aloud to himself, and I agreed with him. At home, in our workshop, Catherine was waiting for us very anxiously. We told her what had happened. The table was laid, but nobody felt hungry. After drinking a glass of wine, and taking off his shoes, Father Goulden said to us, "My children, judging by what we have just seen, the emperor will certainly get to Paris; the soldiers desire it; the peasants, whose property has been threatened, desire it also; and as for the citizens, if he has only become reasonable by meditation in his island, and will renounce his ideas of war, and accept treaties, they will be quite willing to have him back, especially with a good constitution that shall guarantee to every man liberty—the greatest of all possessions. Let us hope so, for ourselves and for him—and good-night."

## CHAPTER XI

Next morning, Friday, being market-day, all the town was full of the great news. Numbers of peasants of Alsace and Lorraine, in blouses, vests, three-cornered hats, and in cotton caps, arrived, in a long procession, in their carts, ostensibly to sell corn, barley, and oats, but really to hear what was happening. Everywhere they could be heard crying to their horses, "Hue, Foux! Hue, Schimmel!" and there was a great rolling of waggon-wheels and cracking of whips. The women were not far behind the men; we saw them arriving from Houpe, Dagsberg, Erchewiller, Lutzelbourg, and Baraques, with their short skirts tucked up, and great baskets on their heads, stepping out quickly, and making great haste. All these people passed in front of our windows, and Father Goulden said, "How they are agitated! How they are all running! Would not one think that somebody's spirit was in the country already? There is no more marching in slow time of people with candles in their hands and surplices on their backs."

He seemed pleased, which showed how much all the ceremonies of late had annoyed him. At last, towards eight o'clock, we had to settle down to work, and Catherine went out, as usual, to buy our butter and eggs and vegetables for the week. At ten o'clock she came home.

"Ah, gracious Heaven!" she said, "everything is upside down already!"

And she told us that the half-pay officers were walking about with their great sword-sticks, Commandant Margarot in the midst of them, and that on the square, in the market, among the benches, between the stalls, everywhere, the peasants, the citizens, everybody, shook hands, offered pinches of snuff, and said, "Ah! things are beginning again!"

She also told us that on the previous night proclamations of Buonaparte had been posted on the mayor's house, on the three doors of the church, and even on the pillars of the market-house, though the gendarmes had torn them down early in the morning. In short, everything was in agitation. Father Goulden had got up from our working-bench to listen; and I thought, as I turned round on my chair,—

"Yes, that is all very good, all very well, but my leave of absence will soon be over now. If everything is moving, you will have to be moving, Joseph. Instead of staying here quietly with your wife, you will have to buckle on your knapsack and bag again, and to carry a musket, and two parcels of cartridges on your back;" and, looking at Catherine, who did not perceive the bad outlook, Weissenfels and Lutzen, and Leipsic came into my mind; and I felt melancholy.

While we sat pensively there the door opened, and Aunt Grethel came in. At first one would have thought that she was in a peaceable mood.

"Good morning, Father Goulden; good morning, my children," she said, as she put down her basket behind the stove.

"Do you keep well, Mother Grethel?" he asked.

"Yes, so far as health goes—so far as health goes," she answered.

I saw already that she was setting her teeth, and there were two red spots on her cheeks. With a hasty gesture she pushed back under her cap the locks of hair that hung about her ears, and then she looked sharply at us, to see what we thought. Then she began in a shrill voice, "It seems that that rascal has escaped from his island."

"What rascal are you speaking of, Mother Grethel?" asked Father Goulden.

"Ha, you know well enough of whom I am speaking," she replied. "I am speaking of your Buonaparte."

Father Goulden, who saw how angry she was, had gone back to our bench to try and avoid a dispute; he pretended to be examining a watch, and I followed his example.

"Yes," she cried in a still louder voice, "he is going to begin his wicked doings again, when we thought it was all over. He has come back worse than ever; what a plague!"

I heard her voice tremble with anger. Father Goulden pretended to go on with his work.

"Whose fault is it, Mother Grethel?" he said, without turning round. "Do you believe that these processions, these expiations, these preachings against the national property and the rebellion of twenty-five years ago, these continual threats to re-establish the old order of rule, to close the shops during service, etc., etc.—did you believe that all that could go on? I would just ask you that. Has any one ever seen anything like it since the world existed—anything more likely to arouse a nation against those who wish to revive such a system? Would

one not have thought that Buonaparte himself had been whispering into the ears of these Bourbons all the foolish things that could disgust the people? Tell me—was not what has now happened to be expected?"

He kept on looking at the watch through his magnifying-glass, for the sake of peace; and I watched Mother Grethel out of a corner of my eye while he was speaking. She had changed colour two or three times, and Catherine, standing in the background near the stove, made a sign to try and stop a quarrel in the house; but the obstinate woman cared nothing for signs.

"So you are content, too, are you?" she said. "So you change from day to day, like the rest of them? You stick up for the republic whenever it is convenient?"

When Father Goulden heard her say this he coughed two or three times, as if something had been in his throat; and then for two or three minutes he seemed lost in thought, while Aunt Grethel, standing behind us, watched him. At last Father Goulden, having recovered his calmness, answered slowly,—

"You are wrong, Madame Grethel, to reproach me thus; if I had wanted to change I should have begun earlier. Instead of being a clockmaker at Phalsbourg I might be a colonel or a general as well as another; but I have always been, and I am, and I shall continue to be till death, for the republic and the rights of man."

Then he turned round suddenly, and looking at Aunt Grethel from head to foot, he continued, with a louder voice, "And that is why I like Napoleon Buonaparte better than the Count of Artois, the emigrants, the missionaries, and the miracle-makers; at any rate, he is obliged to preserve something of our revolution, he is obliged to respect the national domains, to guarantee to every man his property, his rank, and all that he has won according to the new laws. But for that, what right would he have to be emperor? If he did not maintain equality, what reason would the nation have to wish for him? The others, on the contrary, have attacked everything; they want to destroy everything that we have done; that is why I like this man better, do you understand?"

"Ah!" cried Mother Grethel; "this is something new."

She laughed in a mocking way, and I would have been glad to see her back at Quatre Vents.

"There was a time when you spoke differently," she cried; "when that other man re-established the bishops, archbishops, and cardinals; when he had himself crowned by the pope, with

the oil saved from the holy cruse; when he called back the emigrants and restored the châteaux and forests to the great families; when he created princes, and dukes, and barons by dozens, how many times have I not heard you say that it was abominable; that he was betraying the revolution; that you would rather have had the Bourbons, for that at any rate they did not know any better; that they were like blackbirds that always whistle the same tune because they know no other, and they think it is the finest tune in the world; that he had been made by the revolution, that his father had some dozens of goats in the mountains of Corsica, and that ought to have shown him from childhood that men are equal, and that courage and genius alone can elevate them! That he should have despised all those old rags, and that he should have made war only to defend the new rights and the new ideas, which are just, and which nothing can ever stop! Did you not say so, when you were talking with Father Colin in our back garden, for fear of being arrested if any one heard you? Was it not that which you said to each other, before me?"

Father Goulden had turned quite pale. He was looking at his feet, and turning his snuff-box over and over in his hands, as was his habit when he was in deep thought; and I even saw a kind of quiet emotion in his face.

"Yes, I said so," he replied, "and I think so still. You have a good memory, Mother Grethel. It is true that for ten years Colin and I have been obliged to hide ourselves when we wanted to say things that are true, things that would happen in the end; and it was the despotism of a single man, born among us, whom we had raised up by shedding our own blood, that forced us to do so. But to-day things are changed; this man, whose genius nobody can deny, has seen his flatterers abandon him and betray him; he has seen that his real root is in the people, and that the grand alliances, of which he was weak enough to be so proud, caused his ruin. Well, he is come to rid us of these other men, and I am glad of it."

"And have you not enough courage yourselves? Do you require him?" cried Aunt Grethel. "If the processions annoyed you, and if you were what you say—the people—why did you need him?"

Then Father Goulden began to smile, and said, "If everybody were frank enough to act according to his conscience; if many people had not taken part in these processions, some from vanity, to show their fine clothes, others from self-interest to get

good places or privileges, you would be quite right, Madame Grethel, and there would be no need of Buonaparte to overturn it all. It would have been seen that more than three-quarters of the nation had common sense, and perhaps Monsieur the Count of Artois himself would have cried, 'Halt!' But as hypocrisy and self-interest can hide and obscure everything, and make night at noonday, we unfortunately want thunderstorms like that to clear the air. You, and others like you, are the reason why people like me, who have never changed our opinions, are obliged to be glad when fever comes to chase away the colic."

Father Goulden had risen from his seat, and was walking up and down, very much disturbed, and as Aunt Grethel wanted to speak again, he took his cap and went out, saying, "I have told you what I think; now you can talk to Joseph, who always says you are in the right."

And he went out directly. Then Mother Grethel called out, "He's an old madman; he has always been like that! Now, as for you, if you don't go to Switzerland, I warn you that you'll have to go God knows where! But we will talk of this again, my children; the chief thing is that we should be warned beforehand. We must wait to see what happens; perhaps the gendarmes will arrest Buonaparte; but if he reaches Paris we must go elsewhere."

She embraced us, took up her basket, and went away.

A few minutes afterwards Father Goulden came back, and sat down to work beside me, without saying a word on any other matter. We were quite pensive, and in the evening what surprised me most was that Catherine said to me—

"We will always listen to Father Goulden; he is in the right; he knows more of these things than my mother, and will only give us good advice."

When I heard that I thought, "She takes part with Father Goulden because they read the *Gazette* together. This *Gazette* always says what pleases them best; but for all that it would be a terrible thing to have to take up the knapsack and set out again; and it would be better to be in Switzerland, or in the manufactory of Father Rulle, of Chaux de Fonds, than to have to go to Leipsic or another such place."

I did not like to contradict Catherine, but her words filled me with apprehension.

## CHAPTER XII

From that moment confusion prevailed. The half-pay officers cried, "Vive l'Empereur!" The town-commandant would have given orders to arrest them, but the battalions sided with them, and the gendarmes pretended not to hear them. There was no more work done; the inspectors, the foremen, the mayor, and the subordinate officials found themselves in a difficult position, and did not know on which foot to dance. Nobody dared to declare either for Buonaparte or for Louis XVIII., except the tilers, masons, carpenters, and labourers, who would not be ruined, and they did not care who occupied high places. These men, with their hatchets stuck in their leather girdles, and their bundles of materials on their shoulders, did not hesitate to cry, "Down with the emigrants!"

They even laughed at the confusion, which increased every day. One day the papers said, "The usurper is at Grenoble." The next, "He is at Lyons." The next, "At Macon." The next, "At Auxerre." And so it went on.

Father Goulden, when he read this news in the evening, looked very pleased. "One can see now," he cried, "that the French are for the revolution, and nothing else will do instead. Everybody is crying, 'Down with the emigrants!' What a lesson for those who have eyes to see! These Bourbons wanted to make Vendeans of us all; they must rejoice to-day to think how well they have succeeded."

But one thing still touched him, and that was the great battle that was announced as imminent between Ney and Napoleon.

"Although Ney has kissed Louis XVIII.'s hand," he said, "he is still an old soldier of the revolution, and I will never believe that he would fight against the will of the people. No, it is impossible. He will remember the old cooper of Sarrelouis, who would break his head with his hammer, if he were still alive, and heard that Michel had betrayed the country to please the king."

That is what Father Goulden said, but it did not prevent people from being disquieted; when all at once came the news that Ney had followed the example of the army, the citizens,

and all who wanted to get rid of the expiations, and that he had rallied to the side of the emperor. Then the confidence was greater; but the fear of some extraordinary stroke of fortune still kept prudent men quiet.

On the 21st March, between five and six o'clock in the evening, Father Goulden and I were at work; the night was approaching. Outside a fine rain pattered against the glass, and Catherine came to light the lamp. Then Theodore Roeber, who worked the telegraph, came riding at a gallop past our windows; he was mounted on a great dapple-grey horse, and the wind inflated his blouse, so fast was he going. With one hand he held his great felt hat on his head, and with the other he held a stick, and was beating his horse, which galloped like the wind. Father Goulden wiped the pane, bent forward to look out of it better, and said, "It is Roeber coming from the telegraph; some great news has arrived."

His pale cheeks reddened. As for me, I felt my heart beating violently. Catherine came and put down the lamp by us, and I opened the window to close the shutters. This occupied a few moments, because I had to move the glasses on the bench to open the window, and unhook the watches. Father Goulden was lost in reverie. At I was unfastening the bolt we heard the rappel beaten on both sides of the town at once, near the Mittelbronn bastion and that of Bigelberg; the echoes replied from the mountains and from the valley, and the low rumbling filled all the place just as the night was falling.

Father Goulden rose from his seat. "The affair is decided now," said he, in a voice that turned me cold; "either they are fighting in the environs of Paris, or the emperor is in his old palace, as in 1809."

Catherine had already brought him his cloak, for she knew that he was going out in spite of the rain. He went on speaking, with his great grey eyes wide open, and let us draw the sleeves of the coat over his arms without noticing what we were doing; then he went out, and Catherine, touching me on the shoulder, for I was still standing there, said, "Go, Joseph; follow him."

I went down directly. We reached the square just as the battalion defiled from the principal street, at the corner of the mayor's house, behind the drummers, who were running in front with their drums at their backs. A crowd of people followed them. Under the old lime trees, the drums began to beat; the soldiers hastily formed their ranks, and almost

directly afterwards Commandant Gémeau, who was suffering from his wounds, and had not been out of doors for two months, appeared in his uniform on the steps of his house. A sapper orderly held his horse, and lent him his shoulder to help him to mount. The people were all round, looking on. The roll-call began.

Then the commandant rode across the square, and the captains went eagerly to meet him; they spoke a few words to each other; then the commandant rode along the front of the battalion, while behind him came a simple sergeant with three stripes on his arm, carrying a flag wrapped in its oilskin case.

The crowd kept on increasing. Father Goulden and I got upon the edge of a wall, opposite the entrance of the guard-house. After roll-call the commandant drew his sword and gave orders to form square. I relate these things to you simply, because they were simple and terrible. One could see by the pallor of the commandant that he was suffering from fever, and yet it was almost night. The grey lines of the square on the open place, the commandant on horseback in the midst, with the officers around him, standing in the rain, the citizens listening in the deep silence, the windows opening around them—all is still present to my mind, although it is nearly fifty years ago.

Nobody spoke, for every one knew that we were about to learn the fate of France.

"Present arms! shoulder arms!" cried Captain Vidal.

After the rattle of the muskets had ceased, one heard nothing but the voice of the commandant—the same clear voice that I had heard the other side of the Rhine, at Lutzen, and at Leipsic—the voice that had cried, "Close your ranks." It stirred the very marrow in my bones.

"Soldiers," he said, "His Majesty Louis XVIII. quitted Paris on the 20th of March, and the Emperor Napoleon made his entry into the capital the same day."

A sort of trembling murmur passed along the ranks; but that only lasted a moment; and then the commandant went on, "Soldiers! the flag of France is the flag of Arcola, of Rivoli, of Alexandria, of Chebreisse, of the Pyramids, of Aboukir, of Marengo, of Austerlitz, Jena, Eylau, Friedland, Sommo-Sierra, Madrid, Abensberg, Eckmühl, Essling, Wagram, Smolensk, the Moskowa, Weissenfels, Lutzen, Bautzen, Wurtzen, Dresden, Bischofswarda, Hanau, Brienne, Saint-Dizier, Champaubert, Chateau Thierry, Joinvillers, Mery-sur-Seine, Montereau, and

Montmirail. That is the flag we have dyed with our blood . . . that is the flag in which we glory!"

Meanwhile the old sergeant had taken the tattered tricolour flag from its case. The commandant took it in his hand, and went on, "Here is that flag!—you know it again—it is the flag of the nation—it is the flag that the Russians, Prussians, and Austrians and all those whom we spared a hundred times took from us on the day of their first victory, because they were afraid of it!"

A great number of old soldiers, when they heard these words, turned their heads aside to hide their tears; others, very pale, stared straight out with terrible eyes.

"As for me," said the commandant, waving his sword, "I know no other. Vive la France! Vive l'Empereur!"

Hardly had he uttered these words when there was such a shout that one could not hear one's own voice; from all the windows, from the square, the streets, everywhere, cries of "Vive la France! Vive l'Empereur!" sounded like trumpet tones. The people and the soldiers embraced, and one would have said that everything was saved, and that we had regained all we had lost since 1814.

It was almost night; people went off to right and left by threes, by sixes, by twenties, crying, "Vive l'Empereur!" when in the direction of the hospital a red flash lit up the sky, and the cannon sounded; behind the arsenal another replied, and this went on from moment to moment.

Father Goulden and I walked across the square arm-in-arm, crying "Vive la France!" like the rest; and as at every cannon-shot in the dark night the light flashed across the square, we saw in one of the flashes Catherine and old Madelon Schouler coming to meet us. She had put on her little cloak and hood; her rosy face was well hidden from the fog; she said, when she saw us, "There they are, Madelon! The emperor has the upper hand, has he not, Father Goulden?"

"Yes, my child," replied Father Goulden, "it is decided."

Then Catherine took my arm, and I could not say why, but I embraced her two or three times as we went home. Perhaps I felt a presentiment that I should have to go away soon, and should not possess the opportunity much longer. Father Goulden, walking before us with Madelon, said, "This evening, I shall drink a good glass of wine. Come up, Madelon, I invite you." But she would not; and left us at the door.

All that I can say is, that the joy of the people was just

as great as at the arrival of Louis XVIII., and perhaps greater.

Once in our room, and relieved of his great cloak, Father Goulden sat down at the table, for supper was waiting for him. Catherine ran to the cellar to look for a bottle of good wine. We drank and laughed, while the guns made our windows shake. Sometimes people lose their heads, even those who most love peace; these cannon-shots filled us with enthusiasm, and we seemed, as it were, to be resuming our old habits again.

Father Goulden said, "Commandant Gémeau has spoken well; but he might have gone on till to-morrow, if he had begun with Valmy, Hundschott, Wattignies, Fleurus, Neuwied, Ukerath, Froeschwiller, Geisberg, and gone on down to Zurich and Hohenlinden. Those were great victories too, and even the finest of all, because they saved liberty. He only mentioned the last ones, and that was enough for the time. Let our enemies come—let them dare to stir themselves! The nation desires peace; but if the allies begin war, woe to them! Now people will speak again of liberty, equality, fraternity. In that way all France will rise, I assure you—all will rise in a mass. National guards will be appointed; old fellows like me and married men will defend the towns; the young will march, but not beyond the frontier. The emperor, taught by experience, will arm the workmen, the peasants, and the citizens; if the foreigners come, if there were a million of them, not one will cross our frontiers. The time for soldiers has passed away; regular armies are good for conquest, but a people that wants to defend itself does not fear the best soldiers in the world. We showed that to the Prussians, the Austrians, the English, and the Russians, from 1792 to 1800; since that, the Spaniards have shown it to us; and even before, the Americans had shown it to the English. The emperor will talk to us of liberty, you may be sure of it. If he chooses to issue proclamations in Germany, many Germans will side with us; they have been promised liberties, to make them march in mass against France, and now the sovereigns assembled at Vienna mock the idea of keeping their promise; they are dividing the people among themselves like flocks and herds. The sensible people will hold together, and in this way peace must be established. It is only the kings who have an interest in war; nations do not want to conquer each other, so long as they can benefit each other by freedom of commerce, and that is the chief thing."

In his excitement he saw everything in a happy light. For

my own part, I thought what he said was so natural, that I felt sure the emperor would act in the way he suggested. Catherine thought so too. We all blessed the Lord for what had happened, and about eleven o'clock, after we had talked, and laughed, and shouted, we went to bed with the best of hopes. Then all the town was illuminated, and we placed little lamps outside our windows, too. Every moment fireworks were heard going off; the children were crying, "Vive l'Empereur!" and the soldiers came out of the cafés singing, "Down with the emigrants!"

That went on till very late, and it was not till one o'clock that, by the mercy of God, we went to sleep.

## CHAPTER XIII

The general satisfaction continued for five or six days. The old mayors were re-elected, the old deputies and gamekeepers —all these people, in fact, who had been thrust aside some months before. The whole town, men and women, wore little tricoloured cockades, which the dressmakers made up in haste, out of red, blue, and white ribbons. Those who lately had been denouncing the "Corsican ogre," had no other name now for Louis XVIII. but "King Panade." On the 25th March the *Te Deum* was sung; all the garrisons and the authorities were present in great state.

After the *Te Deum*, the authorities gave a magnificent dinner to the staff officers of the town; the weather had become settled, the windows of the Ville de Metz were open, and clusters of lamps hung from the ceiling. Catherine and I went out in the evening to enjoy the sight. All round the long tables, uniforms and black coats were seen fraternising together; and until midnight, sometimes the mayor, sometimes one of his deputies, or M. Brancion, the new town commandant, was getting up to drink the health of the emperor, or of his ministers, or to drink to the prosperity of France, the maintenance of peace, to victory, etc.

The glasses clinked merrily. Outside, the children were letting off fireworks; a pole with prizes on top had been erected in front of the church; some wooden horses and strolling musicians had arrived from Saverne; there was a holiday at the college; and in Klein's courtyard at the Bœuf might be seen a fight between some dogs and two asses; in short, every one was behaving as they had in 1830, in 1848, and since. It is always the same; people invent nothing new to glorify those who rise up, and to mock those who go down.

But it seems that the emperor had no time to lose in rejoicings. The paper said that his majesty wished for peace, that he demanded nothing, that he had come to an agreement with his father-in-law, the Emperor Francis, that Marie Louise and the King of Rome were coming back, that they were expected. Yes, but meanwhile an order came to put the place in a state of defence. Two years before, Phalsbourg had been a hundred

leagues from the frontier; the ramparts were crumbling to ruin, the ditches were almost choked up, there was no artillery in the arsenal but some old pieces of Louis XIV.'s time, rampart guns that were let off with slow matches, and some cannon, so heavy on their clumsy carriages, that whole teams of horses were required to drag them along. The real arsenals were at Dresden, Hamburg, and Erfurt; but now, without having moved, we were ten leagues from Rhenish Bavaria, and upon us the first discharge of shells and bullets would fall. So day by day orders came to heighten the ramparts, clear out the ditches, and put the guns in order.

At the beginning of April a great workshop was established in the arsenal for the repairing of weapons. Men of the engineer corps and artillerymen came from Metz to throw up earthworks inside the bastions and put embrasures around them. There was a greater stir than even in 1805 and 1813, and I thought more than once that wide frontiers at a distance had their advantages, since the people who live in the interior are spared many blows, and can live in peace a long time, while the others are already being bombarded.

We were suffering very great anxiety; for naturally, when new palisades are fixed on the glacis, and fascines are put to the half-moons, and cannon are planted in every angle of a strong town, there will be men wanted to guard and to work all this. More than once, when we heard the decrees read in the evening journal, Catherine and I listened with compressed lips. I felt already that instead of staying here quietly, cleaning and mending clocks, I should perhaps have to begin practising drill again; and that made me feel very uncomfortable. Melancholy took possession of me more and more; often Father Goulden, when he saw me sitting quite pensive, would cry out in a cheerful tone, "Come, Joseph, courage! All will end well."

He wanted to raise my spirits; but I thought, "Yes, yes—you tell me these things to encourage me; but if a man is not blind, he can see what a turn things are taking."

Events marched on so quickly, that decrees followed decrees like hail, all embellished with fine words to make them read well. We heard that the regiments were again to be called by their old numbers, "rendered illustrious in so many glorious campaigns." Without being very clever, we could easily understand that the old numbers which had no regiments would have them again. And if that were not enough, we heard that the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Battalions of infantry, the 4th and 5th Squadrons

of cavalry, thirty battalions of the artillery train, twenty regiments of the Young Guard, ten battalions for the commissariat department, and twenty regiments of marine, were all to be embodied, as they said, to give employment to the half-pay officers of all arms, naval and military; but it was all very well to say this. When regiments are embodied, the next thing is to fill the ranks; and when the numbers are full, the next thing to do is to send the troops away. Ah, when I saw that, my confidence was gone. And they kept on repeating, "Peace, peace! we accept the Treaty of Paris, the kings and emperors assembled at Vienna will come to terms with us, Marie Louise and the King of Rome are on their way back." The more these things were repeated, the more my distrust increased. It was of no use for Father Goulden to say,—

"He has taken Carnot, Carnot is a good patriot, Carnot will prevent him from making war, or, if we are obliged to go to war, he will show him that we must await the enemy at home; we must rouse up the whole nation, and declare the country in danger—and so on."

It was of no use his saying such things as these to me. I still repeated to myself, "All these measures are not taken for nothing; the regiments will be raised to their full strength, that is certain."

It soon became known, too, that ten thousand picked men were to be received into the Guards, and that the light artillery was reorganised. But light artillery is meant to march with an army, as everybody must know. To remain behind ramparts, and defend oneself at home, light artillery is not required. This idea came into my head directly; and even in the evenings I could not help saying so to Catherine. I had always been careful to conceal my forebodings from her; but this time they were too strong for me. She made no reply, which proved to me that she was a sensible woman, and thought as I did.

All these things took away a good deal of my enthusiasm for the emperor. Sometimes when I was at work I said to myself, "After all, I would rather look out of my window at processions than go and fight against people whom I don't know. At any rate, the sight would not cost me an arm or a leg; and if it displeased me very much, I could go and take a walk to Quatre Vents."

My chagrin was increased by the fact that since her dispute with Father Goulden, Aunt Grethel did not come to see us any more. She was an obstinate woman; she would not listen to

reason, and could bear a grudge against people for years and years. Still she was our mother, and it was our duty to defer to her; she only desired our happiness. But how should we bring about accord with her and M. Goulden? That's what troubled us; for if we owed affection to Aunt Grethel, we also owed the greatest respect to the worthy man who regarded us as his own children, and showered benefits on us every day.

These thoughts made us very sad; and I had made up my mind to tell Father Goulden that Catherine and I were Jacobins like himself, but that without disclaiming the ideas of the Jacobins or abandoning them, we ought to honour our mother, and go to inquire for her health. I did not know how he would receive our declaration; but one morning, a Sunday, when we came down at about eight o'clock, we found this excellent man, who had just dressed himself, waiting for us; he seemed in a cheerful mood, and said, "My children, for almost a month Aunt Grethel has not been here to see us; she is obstinate. Well, I am going to show that I am wiser than she, and I will give way to her. Between people like ourselves no cloud ought to exist. After breakfast we will go to Quatre Vents, and tell her she is a stubborn person, and that we love her in spite of her faults. You shall see how ashamed she will be!"

He laughed, and we listened with emotion.

"Ah, Father Goulden, how good you are!" cried Catherine; "any one must have a very bad heart not to love you."

"What!" he said, "what I am doing is natural. Ought people to remain divided for the sake of a few words? Heaven be thanked, age teaches us that the most reasonable man is he who makes the first advances; and you must know that this is even written in the *Rights of Man*, to maintain concord among honest folks."

When he had cited the *Rights of Man*, there was nothing more to be said on the subject. It may be imagined how glad we were. Catherine, in her joy, could hardly wait until breakfast was over; she tripped about right and left, to bring his walking-stick, his square-toed shoes, and the box in which his best wig was fixed on its stand. She helped Father Goulden to get into the sleeves of the brown coat; he looked at her with a smile, and at last embraced her.

"Ah, I knew," he said, "that by doing this I should make you happy. So let us not lose a minute, but start at once."

And so we went out together. The weather was very fine. Father Goulden gave his arm to Catherine, ceremoniously, as

he always did in the town, and I walked behind feeling jubilant. I had before my eyes those whom I loved best in the world, and I was thinking of what Mother Grethel would say. We passed the gates, and then the glacis; and twenty minutes afterwards, without having walked too quickly, we arrived at Aunt Grethel's door.

Perhaps it was then about ten o'clock. As I had gone on a little way in advance, at the auberge of La Roulette, I first went into the avenue of trees which surrounded the house, and looked through the window, to see what aunt was about. She was sitting just opposite me, near the smoking chimney corner; she had on her petticoat with blue stripes and great pockets in front, her bodice with braces, and wooden shoes. She was knitting, with sad and downcast eyes, her thin arms bare to the elbow, and her grey hair twisted at the back of her head, without a cap. When I saw her sitting thus all alone, I said to myself, "Poor Aunt Grethel, she is certainly thinking of us—she continues obstinate in her sorrow—it is a dreary life to be alone, and not to see one's children." That made my heart ache; but at the same moment the door towards the road opened, and Father Goulden entered gleefully with Catherine, crying,

"Ah, as you don't come to see us, Mother Grethel, it is necessary that I should bring your children to you, and that I should come to embrace you myself! You must give us a good dinner, do you hear? And let that be a lesson for you."

He seemed grave, even in his joy. Aunt, when she saw them, hastened to embrace Catherine; then she threw herself into Father Goulden's arms, and hung round his neck.

"Ah, Father Goulden," she cried, "how rejoiced I am to see you! You are a good man—you are a thousand times better than I."

Seeing that things were taking a good turn, I ran to the door, and found them both with tears in their eyes. Then Father Goulden said, "We will not talk politics any more! One may be a Jacobin or anything one likes."

"The chief thing is to have a good heart," said Aunt Grethel. Then she came to embrace me too, and said, "My poor Joseph, I have been thinking of you from morning till night. Now everything is well, and I am content!"

Then she ran off into the kitchen, and began rattling all her pots and pans to regale us; while Father Goulden placed his stick in the corner, with his great hat upon it, and sat down by the stove with the air of a well-pleased person.

"What fine weather!" he exclaimed, "Everything is growing green, everything is flourishing—how glad I should be to live in the fields, to see the hedges through my windows; and apple trees and plum trees, all white and pink!"

He was as merry as a lark; and so we should all have been, but for the ideas of war which we could not banish from our heads.

"Leave things to me, mother," said Catherine. "Sit down quietly by Father Goulden. I will prepare the dinner, as in the old times."

"But you won't know where to look for anything now," said my aunt. "I have altered things."

"Sit down, I pray you," answered Catherine. "Make yourself easy; I shall find the butter, and eggs, and flour, and all that I want."

"Well, well, I must obey you," said aunt, as she went down into the cellar.

Catherine hung her pretty shawl over the back of my chair; she put wood into the fire, and melted some butter, and looked into the saucepans to see that all was going on well. Presently aunt came up from the cellar, with a bottle of white wine.

"You must take some refreshment before dinner," she said; "and while Catherine is attending to the kitchen, I shall put on my gown, and brush myself up a little, of which I stand in need, Heaven knows. For you, you must go out—go to the orchard. Here, Joseph, take these glasses and the bottle—go and sit down in the apiary—it is fine weather, and in an hour all will be ready here. I will come and drink your good health with you."

So Father Goulden and I went out, passing through the high grass and the yellow marigolds, which came up to our knees. It was very warm, and there was a sound of humming all round. We sat down in the shadow of the apiary, looking at the magnificent sun that shone between the buzzing hives. Father Goulden hung up his wig behind him, to be more comfortable; I uncorked the bottle, and we drank the good little white wine.

"Come, everything is going well," said he. "If men are foolish, the good God still watches over the world. Look at those corn crops, Joseph, how they are growing; what a harvest there will be in three or four months' time. And these turnips, and colzas, and shrubs, and bees, how all seem to work, and to live, and to grow! What a pity that men do not follow such an example—that some must work to maintain others in idleness,

and that there must always be drones of all kinds, who treat us as Jacobins because we want to have order, justice, and peace!"

What he loved most in the world was the sight of work: not only ours, which is nothing, but the work of the smallest insects that run on the earth among the grass, as if in endless forests—that build themselves dwellings, and congregate together, and hatch their eggs, and store them up in magazines, and warm them by exposing them to the sun, and take them in at night and defend them against enemies—that great life where everything sings, where everything is in its place, from the lark that fills the sky with its joyous music to the ant which goes and comes, runs to and fro, reaps, sows, drags burdens, and seems able to do everything. Yes, that is what Father Goulden admired; but he never spoke of it but in the fields, when he saw this grand spectacle; and naturally then he spoke of God, whom he called the Supreme Being, like the old calendar-makers of the republic, and said He was the essence of reason, wisdom, goodness, love, justice, order, and life. The old idea of the calendar-makers came back to him too: it was magnificent to hear him talk of pluviose, the season of rain; of nivose, the season of snow; of ventose, the season of winds; and then of floréal, prairial, and fructidor. He said that the ideas of men in those times had reference to the Providence of God, whereas July, September, and October meant nothing, and had been invented for no purpose but to obscure and confuse everything. Once on this subject he could not stop, and he made you see everything in his way. Unfortunately, I have not the learning that he possessed, otherwise I should be very glad to repeat his ideas to you.

We were just discussing this subject when Mother Grethel came from the house towards the apiary, well washed and combed, and in her Sunday clothes; and Father Goulden stopped immediately for the sake of peace.

"Well, here I am," said aunt; "it is all ready now."

"Come and sit down," cried Father Goulden; and he made room for her on the seat beside him.

"Ah, do you know what time it is?" said Aunt Grethel. "Time seems to you to pass quickly. Listen!"

We listened and heard the town clock slowly striking twelve.

"What! twelve o'clock already!" exclaimed Father, in astonishment.

"Well, it is twelve o'clock," said aunt, "and dinner is waiting for you."

"Well and good," said Father Goulden, offering her his arm. "Come, neighbour, let us go in; since you have told me the time, my appetite has come."

They went down the allée arm-in-arm; I followed in very good spirits; and when we came to the door a very agreeable spectacle offered itself to our eyes. The great soup-tureen, with its red painted flowers, was steaming on the table; a stuffed breast of veal filled the room with its fragrant odour, and some spiced cakes were piled up in a great dish on the old oak sideboard; while two bottles, with glasses sparkling like crystal, glittered on the white cloth by the plates; and when one saw this one could not help thinking how many good gifts God showers upon men.

Catherine, with her pretty red cheeks and white teeth, laughed at our satisfaction, and one may say that throughout dinner our disquietude for the future was banished from our minds. We only thought of making ourselves comfortable, and laughed, and thought that everything was satisfactory in the world.

It was not till later in the day, when we were taking coffee, that a kind of sadness came upon us; without knowing why, each of us began to reflect. We would not talk of politics, though, until at last Aunt Grethel herself asked what was the news. Father Goulden replied that the emperor wished for peace, that he was only putting himself in a state of defence, which was necessary, to show our enemies we were not afraid of them. He said that in any case, in spite of their evil desires, the allies would not dare to invade us, for that the Emperor Francis, though he had not much heart, had enough not to desire to overthrow his son-in-law with his daughter and his grandson, a second time; that it would be against nature, and that, moreover, the nation would rise in danger, and that it would not be merely a war of soldiers, but a war of all Frenchmen against those who wanted to oppress them. That this would bring the allied sovereigns to reason, etc.

He said many things which I cannot remember now. Aunt Grethel listened without making any reply. At last she rose, and took from a cupboard a grey paper which she handed to Father Goulden, saying to him,—"Just glance at that; there are similar papers going all round the country; this one comes from Monsieur the Curé Dièmer. You can see by it if peace is secure."

Father Goulden had not his spectacles, therefore I read the

paper to him. I have put all these old writings away years ago; they have become yellow, and no one thinks of them now, or speaks of them; and yet it is always good to read them now and then. Who can tell what will happen? The old kings and emperors, who were against us, have died after doing us all the harm in their power; but their sons and grandsons are alive, and do not look too favourably upon us; what they have asserted in times past they may assert again, and those who helped the old kings may help the new ones. Well, this is what the paper declared,—

"The allied powers, who have signed the Treaty of Paris, and are now assembled at the Congress of Vienna, having been informed of the escape of Napoleon Buonaparte, and of his appearance, in arms, in France, owe to their dignity, and to the interest of social order, a solemn declaration of the sentiments by which they are actuated on this occasion.

"By thus breaking the convention which had established him in the Island of Elba, Buonaparte has destroyed the only legal title on which his existence depended. By reappearing in France with projects of disturbance and confusion, he has deprived himself, by his own act, of the protection of the laws, and has manifested in the face of the universe that there can be no peace or treaty with him."

Thus the allies went on, through two long pages; and these people, who could have nothing in common with us, whom our affairs did not concern, and who gave themselves the title of defenders of the peace, concluded with the declaration that they were going to unite in a body to maintain the Treaty of Paris, and to restore Louis XVIII.

When I had done reading, aunt looked at Father Goulden, and said to him, "What do you think of that?"

"I think," he replied, "that these men are laughing at the people, and that they exterminate the human race without shame and without pity, to maintain fifteen or twenty families in abundance. I think those people look upon themselves as gods, or upon us as beasts."

"Without doubt," said Aunt Grethel, "I don't deny it; but that won't prevent Joseph from having to go."

I turned quite pale when I considered that aunt was right.

"Yes," answered Father Goulden, "I have known it for some days; and this is what I have done. You have no doubt heard, Mother Grethel, that they are establishing great workshops for repairing arms. There is one of them in the

arsenal at Phalsbourg, but they are in want of good workmen. Naturally, good workmen render just as good service to the state, by repairing arms, as those who go out and fight; they have more trouble, but, at any rate, they do not risk their lives, and they stay at home. Well, I went immediately to the commandant of artillery, M. de Montravel, and presented a request that Joseph should be received as a workman. To repair a gunlock is easy work for a good clockmaker. M. de Montravel accepted my proposal at once, and here is his order," said Father Goulden, showing us a paper he drew from his pocket.

Then I felt as though I lived in a new world, and I called out, "Oh, Father Goulden, you are more than a father to us; you have saved my life."

And Catherine, who had been stifling her disquietude all the time, went out directly; while Aunt Grethel, who had got up, embraced Father Goulden a second time, saying, "Yes, you are the best of men—a sensible man—a very clever man indeed. Ah, if all the Jacobins were like you, women would want to marry none but Jacobins."

"But what I have done is a very simple thing," said he.

"No, no, it is not a simple thing, it is your good heart that puts these good ideas into your head."

As for me, in my astonishment and my joy, I could not find words; and while aunt was speaking, I went out into the garden to walk in the open air. Catherine was there in the corner of the summer house, weeping with hot tears.

"Ah, now," she said, "I breathe again; I have new life."

I embraced her with unusual tenderness. I saw what she must have suffered for a month past; but she was a courageous woman, who hid her uneasiness from me; she knew that I had enough anxiety of my own. We stood there more than ten minutes to dry our tears; then, when we had gone in again, Father Goulden said, "Well, Joseph, it is for to-morrow; you must start early; you will have plenty of work."

What happiness to think that I should not have to go away! Ah, I had other reasons for wishing to stay. Catherine and I had hopes of our own. Mon Dieu! those who have never experienced this cannot know what men may suffer, or what a weight is taken off your heart by hearing good news.

We stopped at Quatre Vents about an hour longer. Then just as people were coming back from vespers, and night was falling, we set out on our way back to the town. Aunt Grethel

accompanied us as far as the posting-house, and by seven o'clock we were mounting our own staircase.

Thus it was that peace was concluded between Aunt Grethel and Father Goulden. After that she came to see us as often as ever. I used to go every day to the arsenal, and work at repairing gunlocks. When twelve o'clock rang, I used to come home to dinner. At one o'clock I went back to work, and stayed till seven. I was at once an artisan and a soldier; I was excused from parade, but overwhelmed with work. We hoped that I should remain in this position to the end of the war, if by any unhappy chance it should break out, for nobody knew what might happen.

## CHAPTER XIV

We had gained a little confidence since I had been working at the arsenal, but still we were somewhat disquieted; for hundreds of weekly labourers, veterans, re-enlisted for a campaign, and conscripts were continually passing, with their knapsacks behind them, and dressed in their village clothes. They all cried "Vive l'Empereur!" and looked furious. In the great hall of the mayor's house some received a capote, others a shako, others epaulettes, gaiters, or shoes, at the expense of the department. Then they went away to join the army, and I wished them *bon voyage*.

All the tailors in the town were making uniforms on speculation; the gendarmes gave up their horses to mount the cavalry, and the mayor, Baron Parmentier, excited the young lads of sixteen and seventeen to take service with the partisans of Colonel Brice, who were to defend the passes of the Zorne, the Zinzelle, and the Sarre. M. le Baron was himself going to the Champ de Mai, and that doubled his enthusiasm. "Come—courage!" he would cry to them; and then he talked of the Greeks and the Romans, and how they used to fight for their country.

I thought as I listened to him, "If you think that so fine, why don't you go and join yourself?"

It may be imagined with what zeal I worked at the arsenal; nothing was too much trouble for me, and I could have gone on day and night repairing guns, fitting bayonets, and tightening screws. When Commandant de Montravel came to see what we were doing, he praised me.

"That will do," he said; "that is well; I am pleased with you, Bertha."

I heard these words with much satisfaction, and did not fail to repeat them to Catherine, to cheer her heart; we were almost certain that M. de Montravel would keep me at Phalsbourg.

The papers now talked about nothing but the new constitution, which they called the Additional Act, and of the Champ de Mai. Father Goulden had always some objection to make, sometimes on one point, sometimes on another; but I did not meddle with these affairs; I even felt sorry for having cried

out against the processions and expiations; for I had had enough of politics.

This continued until the 23rd May. That day, towards six o'clock in the morning, I was in the great hall of the arsenal, busy packing cases of guns. Both sides of the great folding doors were open; the soldiers of the military train, with their waggons, were waiting in front of the piles of cannon-balls to load their cases. I was nailing down the last, when Robert, the engineer guard, touched me on the shoulder, and said to me quietly, "Bertha, Commandant de Montravel wishes to see you; he is in the pavilion."

What could the commandant have to say to me? I did not know, and I felt frightened directly. However, I went across the great courtyard, mounted the staircase, and knocked gently at the door.

"Come in!" cried the commandant.

I opened the door, trembling, cap in hand. Commandant de Montravel was a tall, thin, dark man, with his head slightly bowed. He was walking up and down, amid the books, and maps, and weapons that hung from the walls.

"Ah, it is you, Bertha," he said, when he saw me; "I have disagreeable news for you. The 3rd Battalion, to which you belong, is to march to Metz."

When I heard this terrible news I felt my heart stand still, and I could not answer a word.

The commandant looked at me.

"Don't distress yourself," he said, after a moment's silence; "you married some months ago, and, moreover, you are a good workman, and that deserves to be taken into consideration. Give this letter to Colonel Desmichels, at the arsenal of Metz; he is a friend of mine, and will find you employment in his workshops, you may be sure."

I took the letter he held out to me, thanked him, and went away full of anxious forebodings.

At home I found Zebedee, Father Goulden, and Catherine talking together in the workshop; desolation was painted on their faces, for they knew everything already.

"The 3rd Battalion is to march," I said, as I came in; "but that is no matter—for the commandant has just given me this letter for the chief of the arsenal at Metz. Don't be disquieted—I shall not have to serve the campaign."

I felt almost suffocated. Father Goulden took the letter, and said, "It is open, and has been left so that we may read it."

Then he read the letter, in which M. de Montravel recommended me to his friend, saying that I was married, and a good workman, full of zeal, necessary to my family, and that I had done really good service at the arsenal. Nothing better could have been written. Zebedee called out, "Now your business is sure!"

"Yes," said Father Goulden, "you are retained in the arsenal of Metz."

And Catherine became quite pale, and embraced me, saying, "What happiness, Joseph!"

All pretended to believe that I should remain at Metz, and I also tried to hide my terror from them. But it was choking me, and I could hardly keep myself from sobbing; fortunately, the idea came into my head that I would go and tell the news to Aunt Grethel.

"Listen," I said to them. "Though it is not for long, and I am to stay at Metz, I must go and announce this news to Aunt Grethel. This evening, between five and six o'clock, I shall be back. Catherine will have time to pack my bag, and we will have supper together."

"Yes, go, Joseph," said Father Goulden.

Catherine said nothing, for she could scarcely refrain from bursting into tears. I went off hardly knowing what I did. Zebedee, who was going back to barracks, informed me that the officer who superintended the clothing was at the mayor's, and that I must be there towards five o'clock. I listened to his words like one in a dream, and ran away from the town. On the glacis, I set off running, without looking where, along the covered way; I passed the fountain of Trois-Châteaux, and Upper Baraques, beside the wood, to go to Quatre Vents. I cannot describe the thoughts that passed through my brain; I was frightened, and would have liked to run as far as Switzerland. But I felt even worse when I approached Quatre Vents by the path of Dann. It might be three o'clock; Mother Grethel, who was fastening up poles for her beans, behind in the garden, had seen me from a distance. She had said to herself, "But it is Joseph. What is he doing among the cornfields?"

When I got into the sandy road the sun was like a furnace; I walked along slowly, with my head hanging down, thinking to myself, "I shall never dare to go in," and all at once aunt called out to me from behind the hedge, "Is it you, Joseph?"

Then I trembled. "Yes, it is I," I answered.

Then she came out into her little road that surrounds the house, and seeing me standing there quite pale, she said, "I know why you have come, my child. You have to go away; is it not so?"

"Oh," I replied, "I am retained for the arsenal at Metz—the others have to go; but I shall stay at Metz—it is very fortunate!"

She said nothing in reply. We went into the kitchen, which felt very cool compared with the great heat outside. She sat down, and I read her the commandant's letter. She listened, and then she said, "Yes, it is very fortunate."

And then we sat looking at each other without speaking.

Then she took my letter, and embraced me for a long time; and I saw that she was shedding hot tears without heaving a sigh.

"You weep," I said to her. "But I am to stay at Metz."

She said nothing in reply, but presently she went down into the cellar to bring some wine. She made me drink a glass, and then said to me, "What does Catherine say?"

"She is glad to hear that I am to remain at Metz," I answered, "and Father Goulden too."

"That's well," she answered. "Are they preparing what you will need to take?"

"Yes, Aunt Grethel, and I must be at the town-hall by five o'clock to receive my uniform."

"Well, then," she said, "embrace me. I shall not go there. I will not see the battalion march away. I shall remain. I shall live a long time yet. Catherine will want me to live."

She was beginning to speak loudly and angrily; but suddenly she checked herself, and said, "At what time do you go?"

"To-morrow, at seven o'clock, Aunt Grethel."

"Well, then, I will come at eight o'clock. You will be already far away; but you will know that your wife's mother is there; that she will take care of her daughter; that she loves you, and has only you in the world."

And as she spoke thus, this courageous woman burst out sobbing. She went with me as far as the road, and I made my way back, feeling as if I had not a drop of blood in my veins. I got to the town hall at the stroke of five. I went upstairs, and saw the hall again where I had had bad luck—the unlucky hall where everybody drew bad numbers. I received a greatcoat, a coat, a pair of trousers, gaiters, and boots. Zebedee, who

was waiting for me, told a soldier to carry everything to my quarters.

"You must come early and put that on," said he; "your knapsack and gun have been in the rack since this morning."

"Come with me," said I.

"No," he answered; "it breaks my heart to see Catherine; besides, I must stay with my father. Who knows if I shall find the poor old man here next year? I have promised to sup with you, but I shall not come."

So I had to go in alone. My knapsack was ready—my old knapsack—the only thing I had brought back from Hanau—the knapsack on which my head had rested in the ammunition-waggon. Father Goulden was at work; he turned round towards me, but said nothing.

"Where is Catherine?" I asked.

"She is upstairs."

I knew that she must be weeping. I should have liked to go up to her, but my legs and my courage failed me. I told Father Goulden what Aunt Grethel had said at Quatre Vents; and then we waited, sitting thoughtfully opposite each other, neither daring to look in the other's face. Night came on, and when it was quite dark, Catherine came down. She prepared the table in the dark, and then I took her hand, and made her sit down on my knee; and so we remained for another half-hour.

"Is not Zebedee coming?" inquired Father Goulden.

"No; the service keeps him away."

"Well then, let us have supper," said he.

But no one was hungry. Catherine cleared the table at about nine o'clock, and we went to bed. It was the most terrible night I ever passed in my life. Catherine seemed lifeless; I called her, and she did not answer. At midnight I aroused Father Goulden. He dressed himself and came up. We made her drink some water and sugar, and she revived and got up. I cannot tell you everything that happened. I only know that she clung to my knees, and begged me not to forsake her, as if I were going of my own will; but she hardly knew what she was doing. Father Goulden wanted to send for a doctor, but I prevented him. She recovered herself entirely towards daylight, had a long fit of weeping, and at last fell asleep in my arms. Then I did not dare even to embrace her; but Father Goulden and I went out quietly. At such times one feels the miseries of life, and thinks, "O God, why have I been born into this world? Why have I been born into this world? Why have I not been

allowed to slumber on through all eternity? What had I done, before I was born, that I deserve to see those I love suffer, without any fault of mine?" But it is not God that does things like these; it is man who wrings the heart of his fellow-man!

At last Father Goulden and I went down, and he said to me, "She is asleep, she knows nothing about it; it is better so; you shall go away before she awakes."

I thanked Heaven for giving her that sleep. We sat thoughtful, listening for every sound, till at last the drums began to beat. Then Father Goulden looked gravely at me, and we got up. He took the knapsack and strapped it on my shoulders in silence.

"Joseph," he said, "go and see the commandant of the arsenal at Metz, but do not reckon on anything. The danger is so pressing that France requires all her children to defend her. And this time we are not going to take other people's property, but to defend our own country. Remember that it is for yourself, your wife, and all that is dearest to you in the world that you are fighting now. I wish I were twenty years younger, that I might go with you and set an example."

Then we went down quietly; we embraced each other, and I proceeded to the barracks. Zebedee himself took me to the dormitory, where I put on my uniform. All that I remember, after the years that have passed since, is that Zebedee's father, who was there, made my clothes up into a bundle, saying that he was going to our house after our departure; and then the battalion defiled through the Ruelle de Lanche, under the French gate.

Some children followed us. The sentries on duty at the gate presented arms as we passed. And thus we were on the road to Waterloo.

## CHAPTER XV

At Sarrebourg we received orders as to billets. I was quartered upon the old printer Jarcisse, who knew Father Goulden and Aunt Grethel. He made me dine at his table with my new bedfellow, Jean Buche, son of a woodcutter of Harberg, who had never lived on anything better than potatoes till he became a conscript, and who swallowed the meat that was served up to us, bones and all. For my part, I was so melancholy that to hear him chew the bones made me quite nervous.

Father Jarcisse tried to console me, but all he said only made me feel more mournful than ever.

We spent the rest of the day and the following night at Sarrebourg. Next day we marched as far as to the village of Mezieres, the day after that to Vic, and the next day to Solgne; at last, on the fifth day, we drew near to Metz.

There is not much to tell you about our march. Soldiers marching along from stage to stage, white with dust, knapsack on shoulders, carrying their guns as they like, talking, laughing, marching through the villages, looking at the girls, the waggons and homesteads, and hills and valleys, taking no thought about anything. But when one feels sad, and has left at home a wife, and old friends, and people who love one, and whom perhaps one will never see again, everything passes before one's eyes like a shadow, and is forgotten, before one has gone a hundred yards from it.

But the view of Metz, with its lofty cathedral, its old houses and sombre ramparts, aroused me. Two hours before we arrived there, we felt ourselves already in the covered ways. It was very hot, and we marched quickly, so that we might be the sooner in the shade. Then I thought of Colonel Desmichels, and I entertained a hope, a very slight one, and said to myself, "Ah, if I should be so lucky!" I felt for my letter. Zebedee did not talk to me, but he turned and looked at me every now and then. It was no longer quite as it was in the old times. He was a sergeant now, and I was only a private soldier. What would you have? We were fond of each other just as before; but it made a difference, for all that.

Jean Buche marched along by my side with his shoulders

rounded, and his feet turned in like a wolf's. The only remark he made from time to time was that shoes cramped the feet during a march, and ought only to be worn on parade. For two months the sergeant-instructor had been trying in vain to turn out his toes and straighten his shoulders; but he was a terrible person for marching, in his own fashion, and never got tired.

At last, about five o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived at the outworks. A party came forward to reconnoitre us, and the captain of the guard called out, " Pass on! "

Then the drums began to beat, and we entered that famous town, the oldest place I have ever seen. At Metz the Seille and the Moselle join, and there one sees houses of four or five stories high, the decrepit old walls crossed and re-crossed with beams, as at Saverne and Bouxviller; round windows and square ones, small windows and big, all on the same line, with shutters and without shutters, glazed and unglazed. The buildings look as old as the mountains and rivers, and the roofs at the top project five or six feet, and throw long shadows over the black waters, where old shoes, and rags, and dead dogs float along the river.

If you turn your eyes up in these quaint places, you are almost sure to see the face of an old Jew, with grey beard and hooked nose, or a child reaching out, in danger of tumbling down, or something of that kind; for to say the truth, Metz is a town of Jews and soldiers, for there are plenty of poor people. It is worse than at Mayence, or Strasbourg, or even Frankfort. Perhaps, however, all this has changed since those times; people love their ease now, and embellish their towns more day by day.

So we walked along, past these sights, and in spite of my melancholy, I could not help glancing down these lanes. The town was swarming at that time with National Guards; they were coming from Longwy, Sarrelouis, and other places; for the soldiers were marching out, and the National Guards came in to take their places.

We came at last to an open square, littered with mattresses, palliasses, and other articles of bedding that the citizens furnished to the troops. We were ordered to stand at ease in front of a barrack building, where the windows were open from top to bottom. We stood at ease, thinking we should be quartered in these barracks; but after twenty minutes' delay, the distribution of billets began. Every man received twenty-five sous and a lodging-ticket. Then we were told to do as we please, and every

man went his way. Jean Buche, who had never seen any town except Phalsbourg, stuck close to me.

Our billet was upon Elias Meyer, butcher, who lived in the Rue de St. Valery. When we arrived at the house, the butcher, who was cutting up meat at an arched window, with a grating in front of it, lost his temper, and received us very rudely. He was a big red-haired Jew, with a round face, and wore silver rings on his fingers and in his ears; his meagre and yellow wife came downstairs, complaining that soldiers had been billeted on them the night before, and the night before that—that the secretary at the mayor's office had a grudge against them, and sent them soliders every day, while their neighbours had none—and so on. However, they let us come in. Their daughter came to look at us. Behind her stood a fat servant-girl with frizzled hair, looking rather dirty. I fancy I can see these people before me now, in the old oak-panelled room, with the copper lamps hanging from the ceiling, and the grated window opening on a little courtyard.

The girl, who was very pale, and had black eyes, spoke a few words to her mother; and then the servant was instructed to take us up into the garret, into the beggar's room; for all the Jews have beggars whom they feed on Fridays. My comrade from Harberg thought this quite natural, but I felt very indignant. Despite this, we followed the servant up a winding staircase, slippery with dirt; and so we came up to the garret, a place surrounded with laths, through the cracks of which we could see a store of dirty linen waiting to be washed. The daylight came in through a loophole in the roof. Had I felt less depressed, I should have thought this an abominable place; we had only a single chair, and a palliasse spread on the floor, with a blanket, for the two of us. The servant looked at us as she went out of the door, as if she thought we ought to have complimented her highly.

I sat down and took my knapsack off my shoulders, feeling very low-spirited, as you may suppose; Buche did the same. The servant began to go downstairs, when I called out to her, "Wait a minute; we are coming down too; and we don't want to break our necks on the staircase."

After changing our shoes and stockings, we fastened the door with a padlock, and went downstairs into the butcher's shop to buy some meat. John went to get some bread from the baker's opposite; and as we had a right to a place by the fire, we went into the kitchen to make the soup.

The butcher came down to see us at eight o'clock. He had a great Ulm pipe. We were just finishing eating. He asked us from what country we came. I did not answer him, for I felt too indignant; but Jean Buche told him that I was a clock-maker at Phalsbourg, whereupon the man began to treat me with more consideration. He said that his brother travelled in Alsace and Lorraine, with watches, rings, watch-chains and other articles of goldsmiths' work and jewellery; that his name was Samuel Meyer, and that perhaps we had done business together. I told him that I had seen his brother two or three times at Father Goulden's, which was the case. Then he told the servant to carry up a pillow for us; but he did nothing more, and very soon we went to bed. We were very fatigued, and soon fell asleep. I intended to get up early and proceed to the arsenal; but I was still asleep when my comrade shook me, and cried, "The Rappel."

I listened, and found he was right. We had only just time to dress ourselves, buckle on our knapsacks, seize our guns, and go down. Just as we came to the place in front of the barracks the roll-call was beginning. When it was over, two waggons came up, and each man received fifty ball cartridges. Commandant Gémeau, the captain, and all the officers were there. I saw that it was all over, that I must not count upon anything, and that my letter to Colonel Desmischels might be delivered after the campaign, if I survived to finish my seven years. Zebedee looked at me from a distance; I turned away my head. A moment afterwards the word was given, "Present arms! Slope arms! Left file, forward, march!"

The drums beat, and we marched in step. The roofs, houses, windows, lanes, and people seemed defiling past us. We crossed the first bridge; and then the drawbridge; the drums ceased beating; we were going in the direction of Thionville. Other troops, cavalry and infantry, were going along the same road.

In the evening we came to the village of Beauregard, and the next evening to the village of Vitry, near Thionville, where we remained in cantonments until the 8th June. I lodged, with Buche, at a fat yeoman's house named M. Pochon, an honest man, who gave us good white wine to drink, and used to be fond of talking politics, like Father Goulden.

During our sojourn in this village, General Schoeffer arrived from Thionville, and we had to take our muskets to be examined near a great farm called the farm of Silvange.

The country here was thickly wooded. Several of us went together for a walk in the environs. One day Zebedee came to fetch me, and took me to see the great foundry of Moyeuvre, where we saw them casting cannon-balls and bombshells. We chatted about Catherine and Father Goulden; he told me to write to them, but I seemed to dread receiving news, and turned my mind as much as I could from Phalsbourg.

On the 8th June, very early in the morning, the battalion marched out of the village, and retreated nearly to Metz, but without entering the city. The gates were shut, and there were guns on the ramparts, as in time of war. We slept at Chatel, and the next day at Etain, and the day after that at Dannevoux, where I was quartered upon a good patriot named M. Sebastien Perrin. He was a rich man. He wanted to know the particulars of everything; and as many battalions had followed the same route before us, he said, "In a month, or perhaps earlier, we shall hear of great things; all the troops are marching upon Belgium. The emperor is going to attack the English and the Prussians!"

This was the last pleasant place we had; for the next day we arrived at Youg, which is a bad place. On the 12th June we slept at Vivier; on the 13th at Cul de Sard. The farther we went on the more troops we met, and as I had already seen this sort of thing in Germany, I said to my comrade, Jean Buche, "Now it is going to get hot."

From all sides and in all directions, cavalry, infantry, and artillery were advancing in long lines, covering the roads as far as one could see. It was impossible to imagine better weather or more beautiful crops than we saw; only it was too hot. What astonished me was, that I could discern no enemy either before us or behind us, neither to the right or to the left. No one knew anything. There was a rumour that, this time, we were going to attack the English. I had already seen the Prussians, the Austrians, Russians, Bavarians, Wurtemburgers, and Swedes; I should know the people of all nations, if I now encountered the English. I thought, "If we are to exterminate each other, I would rather it should happen with these than with the Germans. We cannot avoid our fate; if I am to escape, I shall escape; if I am to leave my bones here, whether I do all I can to save them or do nothing at all, it will come to the same thing. But we must kill as many of the enemy as we can; for by that means we shall increase our own chances of escape."

Such were the arguments I repeated to myself, and if they did me no good, at least they did me no harm.

## CHAPTER XVI

We passed the Meuse on the 12th; on the 13th and 14th we continued marching along bad roads, bordered with fields of corn, oats, barley, and hemp in never-ending succession. It was extremely hot, and I perspired very much under my knapsack and pouch. What a misfortune it is to be poor, and not to be able to buy a substitute who will march and stand to be shot at instead of yourself! After having gone through wind and rain, and snow and mud in Germany, it was now our turn to endure the sun and the dust.

I could see now that the work of extermination was going to begin; on every hand nothing was heard but the sound of drums and trumpets; when the battalion passed over rising ground long lines of helmets, lances, and bayonets appeared, as far as the eye could reach. Zebedee, marching with his gun on his shoulder, sometimes cried out to me in a cheerful tone, "Well, Joseph, so we and the Prussians are going to look into the whites of each other's eyes again!"

And then I was obliged to reply, "Yes, yes, the game is going to begin again!"

Just as if I had been pleased at having to risk my life again, and perhaps to leave Catherine a widow before she was of age, and all on account of things that did not concern me.

The same day towards seven o'clock, we arrived at Rôly. Some hussars already occupied the village, and they made us bivouac in a sunk road, by the side of the ridge.

We had scarcely piled our arms when several field officers arrived. Commandant Gémeau, who had just dismounted, got on his horse again, and hastened to meet them. They talked together for a few minutes, and then came down towards us, while we all said to one another, "There is something going on."

One of the field officers, General Pécheux, whom we knew afterwards, ordered the drums to be beaten and then called out, "Form a circle!"

But as the road was too narrow, the soldiers climbed up on the banks on each side; a few remained below. All the battalion looked up in expectation, and then the general unrolled a paper, and cried out to us, "Proclamation of the emperor."

When he said that the silence became so profound that one

would have thought he was alone in the midst of the field. Every one was listening, from the youngest conscript to Commander Gémeau; and even to-day, when I think of it, fifty years after, it stirs my heart; for there was something grand and terrible about it.

This is what the general read to us: "Soldiers! It is to-day the anniversary of Marengo and of Friedland, which twice decided the fate of Europe. Then, as after Austerlitz and Wagram, we were too generous; we believed the protestations and promises of the princes whom we allowed to keep their thrones. But to-day, in alliance against us, they attack the independence and the most sacred rights of France. They have begun to make the most unjust of aggressions. Let us march forward to meet them; are we all no longer the men we used to be?"

All the battalion trembled with excitement, and shouted "Vive l'Empereur!" The general held up his hand, and every one was silent, and leant forward still more eagerly to listen. "Soldiers! At Jena, against these same Prussians who are so arrogant to-day, we were one against three, and at Montmirail one against six. Let those among you who have been prisoners in the hands of the English tell the story of their prison ships, and of the sufferings they have endured in them.

"The Saxons, the Belgians, the Hanoverians, the soldiers of the confederation of the Rhine, grieve at being obliged to lend their arms to the cause of princes who are enemies of justice and of the rights of every nation. They know that this coalition is insatiable—that after having devoured twelve millions of Poles, twelve millions of Italians, a million of Saxons, six millions of Belgians, it will proceed to devour the secondary States of Germany.

"The madmen! A moment of prosperity has blinded them; the oppression and humiliation of the French people is a task beyond their power. If they enter France, they will find a tomb there.

"Soldiers, we shall have to make forced marches, to fight battles, and to encounter perils; but, with constancy, victory will be ours; the rights of man and the happiness of our country will be reconquered. For every Frenchman who has courage, the moment has come to conquer or to die!

"NAPOLEON."

No one can ever imagine anything like the cry that now

arose; it elevated one's very soul; one would have thought that the emperor had breathed into us his spirit of battles, and we were ready to kill everybody who stood in his way.

The general had been gone a long time, and still the shouting continued; and for my part I was glad, for I felt that all this was the truth; that the Prussians, Austrians, and Russians, who at one time talked of nothing but the deliverance of nations, had taken advantage of the first opportunity to seize everything for themselves; that all the fine talk about liberty which they had put forward in 1813, to bring out the young men against us, all the promises and constitutions they had given had been put aside. I regarded them as rascals, as people who did not keep their word, who deceived the public, and had only one little miserable idea—always to remain in the best place, with their children and descendants, good or bad, just or unjust, without regard for the law of God.

That is what I saw. This proclamation seemed to me a very good one. I even thought that Father Goulden would be much pleased with it, because the emperor had not forgotten the rights of man, which are—liberty, equality, justice, and all those great ideas which cause men, instead of acting like animals, to respect themselves and also to respect the rights of their neighbours.

Our courage was greatly enhanced by these strong and just words. The old soldiers laughed, and said,—"This time we shall not have to wait long. We shall fall upon the Prussians after the first march."

And the conscripts, who had never yet heard the bullets whistling, rejoiced more than the others. Buche's eyes gleamed like those of a cat; he had seated himself by the roadside, with his knapsack open on the bank, and was slowly whetting his sabre and trying its edge on the tip of his shoe. Others were sharpening their bayonets, or examining the flint in their musket-locks, which always has to be done during a campaign, on the eve of an engagement. At such times a thousand ideas pass through a man's head; and he knits his brows and sets his lips hard, and has an evil look in his face.

The sun was sinking lower behind the corn-fields; some detachments went out to forage for wood in the village, and they brought back with them also some onions and leeks, salt, and even quarters of beef slung on great poles over their shoulders.

When the fires and the soup-kettles began to hum, and the

smoke curled upwards towards the sky, our faces were quite cheerful. One talked of Lutzen, another of Austerlitz, another of Wagram, Jena, Friedland, of Spain and Portugal, and all the countries in the world. All were talking together, but none were listened to but the old soldiers with their arms covered with stripes, who could talk best, and could point out the positions with a finger, on the ground, and explain the movements to right and left, and the manœuvres of a battle. We could fancy we saw it all as they related it.

Each one had his tin spoon at his button-hole, and thought, "The soup is getting on nicely, this is good tender meat."

By this time night was upon us. After the distribution the order was given to put out the fires, and not to sound the retreat; which meant that the enemy was not far off, and that they feared to excite him.

The moon began to shine. Buche and I ate out of the same bowl; when we had finished, he talked to me for more than two hours about the life they had led at Harberg, and how miserable it was when they had to drag large quantities of wood on a sledge, with the chance of being crushed to death, especially at the time when the snow was melting. The life of a soldier, with its good soup and good bread, the regular rations, the good warm clothing, the stout shirts of thick linen, all appeared admirable to him. He had had no idea of such good living; and the only thing that troubled him was how to let his two brothers, Gaspard and Jacob, know what a good position he was in, that they might enlist when they were old enough.

"Yes," I said to him, "it is all very well; but the Russians, the English, the Prussians—you don't think of them."

"I laugh at them," he answered. "My sabre cuts like a paring-knife, and my bayonet pierces like a needle. It is they, rather, who should be afraid to meet me."

We were the best friends in the world; I was almost as fond of him as of my old comrades, Klipfel, Furst, and Zebedee. He was very fond of me too; I think he would have been cut to pieces to get me out of a difficulty. Old comrades never forget one another; within my time, old Harwig, whom I knew later at Phalsbourg, used still to receive a pension from his old comrade, Bernadotte, King of Sweden. If I had become a king, I would also have given a pension to Jean Buche; for if he had not much brains, he had a good heart, and that is worth more.

While we were talking together, Zebedee came up and clapped me on the shoulder.

"Don't you smoke, Joseph?" he said to me.

"I have no tobacco."

Immediately he gave me half a packet.

I saw that he still loved me in spite of the difference of our grades, and that softened me. He could hardly contain himself for joy at the thought that we were going to attack the Prussians.

"What a revenge!" he cried. "No quarter! they must pay us for everything—from the Katzbach to Soissons!"

One would have thought that these same Prussians and English were not going to defend themselves, and that we ran no risk of cannon-balls and musket-bullets as at Lutzen, Gross-Beeren, and Leipsic, and everywhere. But what are you to say to people who don't remember anything, and who see everything in glowing colours? I quietly smoked my pipe, and replied, "Yes, yes, we shall serve them out, the vagabonds!—we shall bowl them over! They will find us tough fellows!"

I let Jean Buche fill his pipe; and as we were to mount guard, Zebedee, towards nine o'clock, went to relieve the first sentinels, at the head of his picket. As for me, I stepped out of our circle, and lay down a few paces away, with my head on my knapsack, at the edge of a furrow. The weather was so hot, that one heard the crickets chirping long after the sun had gone down; some stars were shining in the sky; not a breath of air was wafted across the plain; the corn-stalks were quite upright, and in the distance the village clocks struck nine, ten, eleven o'clock. At last I fell asleep. It was the night between the 14th and 15th of June, 1815.

Between two and three in the morning Zebedee came and shook me. "Get up," he said, "En route!"

Buche had stretched himself beside me; we both got up. It was our turn to relieve guard. It was still night; but the dawn had spread a white line along the margin of the sky, over the corn-fields. Thirty feet off, Lieutenant Bretonville was waiting for us, surrounded by a picket. It is uncomfortable to get up when one is sleeping so peacefully, after a march of ten hours. We buckled our knapsacks and reached the picket. After we had marched together about a couple of hundred yards I stepped behind a hedge to relieve the sentinel opposite Rôly. The watchword was "Fleurus and Jemmapes!" That comes back upon me all at once. How many things remain dormant in our minds for years and years! I had not thought of that watchword since 1815.

I fancy I can still see the sentinel marching back into the road while I renew my priming by the light of the stars; and I can hear, far away, the other sentinels marching slowly to and fro, while the footsteps of the retiring picket dies away behind the hill.

I began to march alongside the hedge, with my musket shouldered. The village, with its little straw roofs, and farther on its steeple of slate, peeped up from among the crops. A mounted hussar, on sentry in the middle of the road, was looking out, with his carbine resting on his thigh; and that was all I could see.

For a long time I remained there, thinking, looking out, and walking about. Everything slept. The white line on the horizon became broader.

That lasted more than half an hour. The morning light spread grey over the country. Two or three quails called and answered each other from various parts of the plain. I stood still, feeling quite melancholy, for the sound brought back to me the remembrance of Quatre Vents, Danne, and Baraques du Bois-de-Chênes; I thought, "At home, in our corn-fields, the quails are also singing on the side of the wood of Bonnefontaine. Is Catherine sleeping, and Aunt Grethel, and all the town? The National Guards of Nancy have relieved us now!" And I could fancy I saw the sentinels of the two powder-magazines, and the guard at the gates—in fact, innumerable ideas passed through my mind; when all at once I heard the galloping of a horse in the distance. I looked, but at first could see nothing. After a few minutes the sound passed on into the village; and then all was silent, except that I could hear a confused murmur. What was the meaning of that? A minute afterwards the horseman came riding out of Roly towards us, at full speed; I advanced to the side of the hedge, with my musket all ready, and cried, "Who goes there?"

"France!"

"What regiment?"

"Twelfth chasseurs—orderly."

"Pass on!"

He hurried on his way faster than ever. I heard him draw in his horse in the middle of our encampment, and cry, "The commandant!"

I advanced to the ridge of the hill to see what was going on. Directly afterwards there was a great stir; the chasseur, who had not dismounted, was speaking to Commandant Gémeau,

and soldiers were coming up. I listened, but it was too far off to hear anything. The chasseur went away, riding up the ridge. Everything seemed in commotion, and everybody was talking loudly and gesticulating.

All at once the réveillè was beaten. The picket that relieved the sentries was turning the corner of the lane As Zebedee came up he looked quite pale.

"Come on!" he said, as he went by.

There were two more sentinels on the left, waiting to be relieved. One does not talk while under arms; but, nevertheless, Zebedee said to me, in a whisper, "Joseph, we are betrayed; Bourmont, the general at the advanced guard division, and five other rascals, like him, have just gone over to the enemy."

His voice trembled. All my blood seemed to give a great leap in my veins; and looking at the other men of the picket, two old soldiers, with stripes on their arms, I saw that their moustaches were quivering, they rolled their eyes ferociously, as if looking for some one to kill; but they said nothing.

We quickened our pace to relieve the two other sentinels. Some minutes afterwards, when we came to the bivouac, we saw the battalion already under arms, and prepared to start. Fury and indignation were painted on every face; the drums were beating. We took our place in the ranks. The commandant and the captain-adjutant-major on horseback in front of the battalion were waiting, looking as pale as death. I remember that the commandant suddenly drew his sword to make the drums cease beating, as if he wanted to say something; but he could not remember what he intended to say; and he began shouting, like a madman, "Ah, rascals!—ah, miserable chouans! Vive l'Empereur!—no quarter!"

He stammered, and did not know what he was saying; but all the battalion thought he made a very good speech, and all began to growl like wolves, "Forward! Forward—against the enemy!—no quarter!"

We went through the village at the double; the humblest soldier was indignant at not seeing the Prussians immediately. It was not till an hour afterwards, when each man had made his own reflections, that we began to swear and to exclaim; first we grumbled and muttered, and then cried out quite loudly, so that the battalion seemed to be in a state of mutiny. Some said that all the officers of Louis XVIII. ought to be exterminated; others cried out that they wanted to betray us all in a

body; and others even declared that the marshals were traitors, and that they ought to be brought before a court-martial to be shot; and other things of the kind.

Then the commandant ordered a halt, and passed before us, crying that the traitors were too late; that they were to attack that very day, and the enemy would not have time to profit by the treason before he would be fallen upon and overthrown.

These words calmed the fury of the majority. We resumed our march, and repeated, as we went along, that the treason had been too late.

But our anger was turned into joy, when, at about ten o'clock, we heard the roar of cannon on the left, five or six leagues off, on the other side of the Sambre. Then the men waved their shakos on the points of their bayonets, and began to shout, "Forward! Vive l'Empereur!"

Many old soldiers wept with emotion. Over all this great plain there arose one immense cry; directly one regiment was silent, another took it up. The cannon kept on sounding, and we walked faster and faster. We had been marching on Charleroi since seven o'clock, then came an order by a staff officer, commanding us to bear to the right.

I also remember that in the villages through which we passed, men, women, and children stood at the windows and doors looking out at us; and that they lifted their hands with a joyous air, crying, "The French! the French!"

One could see that these people liked us, and that they were of the same blood with us; and even during the two halts that we made they came out with their good home-made bread with a great knife stuck in the crust, and big jugs of black beer, both of which they offered us without asking payment. We had, so to speak, come to their rescue without knowing it. Nobody in their country knew anything that was going on, which shows the cleverness of the emperor, for in that corner of the Sambre and the Meuse we had thousands of men, and not the least intelligence had reached the enemy. The treason of Bourmont prevented us from surprising them while they were scattered in their cantonments; all would then have been finished at a blow; but now it would be much more difficult to exterminate them.

We continued marching all the afternoon, through the great heat, along the dusty roads. The further we went on, the more we saw other regiments of cavalry and infantry in front of us. We seemed to be massed together, so to speak, more

and more, for behind us fresh regiments kept coming up. Towards five o'clock, we reached a village where battalions and squadrons were defiling over a stone bridge. As we went through the village, which our advanced guard had carried, we saw some Prussians stretched by the roadside to right and left. I said to John Buche, "Look, those are Prussians! We saw plenty of them about Lutzen and Leipsic; and you'll see some of them too, John."

"So much the better," he replied. "That is just what I should like."

The village we were passing through was called Chatelet; the river we crossed was the Sambre; its water was yellow, full of clay, and deep. Those who are unfortunate enough to fall into it have great trouble in getting out, for the banks are very steep, as we found out afterwards.

On the other side of the bridge we had to bivouac along the bank of the river. We were not altogether in the advanced guard, for some hussars had passed through before us; but we were the foremost infantry of Gérard's corps.

All the rest of that day the 4th Corps was defiling over the bridge, and we heard at night that the army had passed the Sambre, and that there had been fighting near Charleroi, at Marchiennes and at Jumet.

## CHAPTER XVII

When we were on the farther bank of the Sambre we piled our arms in an orchard, so that every man might light his pipe and take breath, looking at the hussars, the chasseurs, the artillery, and infantry as they defiled over the bridge hour after hour to occupy their position in the plain.

In front of us was a forest of beech trees; it extended in the direction of Fleurus, and was perhaps three leagues in length from one end to the other. In the interior of the forest great yellow spaces were to be seen; they were stubble fields, and even patches of corn, instead of furze, and brambles, as in our district. About twenty houses, old and ruinous, were built on the other side of the bridge, for Châtelet is a very large village, larger than the town of Saverne.

Among the battalions and squadrons which were constantly marching past, men, women, and children appeared with jugs of strong beer, bread, and very strong white brandy, which they sold to us for a few sous. Buche and I enjoyed a crust together, looking at these things, and even joking with the girls, who are fair and very pretty in this part of the world.

We soon approached the little village of Catelineau, and far off on our left, between the wood and the river, the village of Gilly.

The sound of cannon, the rolling of musketry, and platoon firing continued in that direction. The news soon came that the Prussians, driven back from Charleroi by the emperor, had taken position in squares at the edge of the forest. We expected every minute to be ordered to march and cut off their retreat. But between seven and eight o'clock the firing ceased. The Prussians had retreated upon Fleurus, after having lost one of their squares; the remainder had taken shelter in the forest, and presently we saw two regiments of hussars arrive. They took up their position on our right along the bank of the Sambre.

Soon afterwards the rumour spread that General Le Tort, of the Guard, had been struck by a ball in the body. This happened in the very neighbourhood where, as a youth, he used to drive a farmer's cattle to pasture. What astonishing things one witnesses in life! This general had been fighting for twenty years in every part of Europe, and it was here that Death had been waiting for him!

It was about eight o'clock in the evening, and we all thought that we should remain at Chatelet until our three divisions had passed by. An old bald-headed peasant, in a blue blouse and cotton cap, lean as a goat, who kept near us, told Captain Gregoire that at the other side of the forest were situated the villages of Fleurus and Lambusart, small places rather to the right; he said that for at least three weeks the Prussians had occupied these villages, and that reinforcements had come during the last two days. He also told us that along the great white road bordered with trees, which could be seen stretching away two leagues on our left, the Belgians and Hanoverians held positions at Gosselies and Quatre Bras; that it was the high road to Brussels where the English, the Hanoverians, and the Belgians had all their forces; while the Prussians, four or five leagues to the right, occupied the road to Namur; that between them and the English, from the plateau of Quatre Bras to that of Ligny, behind Fleurus, there extended a good high road, along which their orderlies were riding from morning to night; so that the English got all the news from the Prussians, and the Prussians knew of all the movements of the English; that they could thus help each other, and send each other men and cannon and ammunition along this road.

Naturally when I heard that, the thought at once came into my head that the best thing we could do would be to occupy the road, and prevent them from helping each other. A man's good sense ought to tell him that, and I was not the only one who had the idea, but we said nothing for fear of interrupting the old man. In five minutes he had half the battalion standing round him in a circle. He was smoking a clay pipe, and pointed out the different positions with the stem. Having been a carrier between Châtelet and Fleurus and Namur, he knew every detail of the country, and saw what was going on from day to day. He complained a great deal of the Prussians, saying that they were proud, fiery, and insolent, and dangerous to women; that they were never satisfied; that the officers boasted of having driven us before them from Dresden to Paris, and declared that we had run away like hares.

That made me feel very indignant. I knew that they had been two against one of us at Leipsic; that the Russians, Austrians, Saxons, Wurtemburgers, Bavarians, and Swedes—all Europe, in fact—had come down upon us when three-fourths of our army were sick from the effects of typhus fever, hunger, and cold, and the hardships of marching and countermarching;

and that all this had not prevented our beating them thoroughly at Hanau, and beating them fifty times besides, when they had three to our one, in Champagne, Alsace, the Vosges, and everywhere else. These boastful Prussians disgusted me; I felt a detestation of them, and thought, "It is such rascals as those who make a man's blood boil!"

The old man also said that the Prussians constantly boasted that they were soon going to enjoy themselves in Paris, and drink good French wines, and that the French army was nothing but a band of brigands.

When I heard that, I said to myself, "Joseph, this is too much. You must have no mercy upon them. It must be extermination!"

Half-past nine chimed from the village of Châtelet. The hussars sounded the retreat, and each man found a place for himself behind a hedge or a fence, or in a furrow, to lie down and sleep. When the general of Schoeffer's brigade came and ordered the battalion to move to the other side of the wood, and act as an advanced guard, I saw at once that our unfortunate battalion was always to be the advanced guard, as in 1813. It is a bad thing for a regiment to have a reputation; the men are changed, but the number remains. The 6th Light Infantry was regarded as having a fine reputation, and I had experience of what it cost to possess such a reputation.

Those of us who at first wanted to sleep, did not long feel sleepy; for when you know that the enemy is very near, and the men say to one another, "The Prussians are perhaps there, waiting in ambush for us in that wood," it makes you keep your eyes open.

Some hussars, pushed forward as skirmishers to the right and to the left of the road, rode in advance of the column. We marched at the ordinary step, our captains in the spaces between the companies, and Commandant Gémeau riding in the centre of the battalion on his little grey mare.

Before we started, each man reeieved a three-pound loaf and two pounds of rice; and that is the way the campaign opened for us.

It was a magnificent moonlight night; all the country round about, and even the forest, for three-quarters of a league before us, shone brilliantly, like silver. I could not help thinking of the wood at Leipsic where I had slipped in a clay hole, with two Prussian hussars, while poor Klipfel was being cut into a thousand pieces near by; and this idea kept me very attentive.

Nobody spoke; Buche himself raised his head, and clenched his teeth; and Zebedee, on the left of the company, did not glance in my direction, but kept his eyes fixed on the wood like all the rest.

It took us nearly an hour to get to the wood. When we were two hundred paces from it, the order was given to halt. The hussars fell back upon the flanks of the battalion, and a company was sent forward to skirmish in the wood. We waited for about five minutes, and as no disturbances or alarm followed, we then resumed our march. The way we took in the forest was by a cart-road of considerable width. The column marched in the shadow. Every now and then there were great open spaces which gave us light and air. Some trees had been recently cut down, and the white logs, built up into stacks within wooden frames, gleamed now and again. Nothing else was to be seen, and all was silent around.

Then Buche whispered to me, "I like to smell the scent of the wood; it reminds me of Harberg."

I thought to myself, "I care very little for the scent of the wood; if we only escape getting a bullet into us, that is the chief thing." At last, after two hours' marching, we could see light through the end of the wood, and arrived safely at its extremity without having met any one. The hussars who had accompanied us went away directly, and the battalion stood at ease.

We had never seen before such a corn country as we were in. The wheat was in flower, though still a little green; the barley was almost ripe. The growing crops extended as far as one could see. We all stood looking, in profound silence; and then I saw that the old peasant had not deceived us, for beyond a sort of hollow, about two thousand paces in front of us, rose an old steeple, and around it some slate-covered gables on which the moon was shining. This must be Fleurus. Nearer to us, on our right, we saw some thatched cottages, some houses, and another steeple, which, no doubt, was Lambusart. But much farther off, at the end of the great plain, more than a league distant, and at the back of Fleurus, the ground rose into hills, and these hills shone with innumerable fires. One could very plainly see three great villages built along these heights, from right to left, and we afterwards learned that the one nearest to us was Saint Amand, the middle one Ligny, and the farthest, which was at least two leagues distant, Sombref. We could see this plainer than in the daylight, on account of the enemy's

fires. The Prussian army was posted there, in the houses, the orchards, and the fields. And behind this line of three villages we could see another, higher up and further off, on the left, where fires were burning likewise; it was Bry, where these rascals, no doubt, had their reserves.

I comprehended all I saw very well, and I could understand that the position would be very difficult to take. So there we stood, looking at this grand spectacle.

In the plain on our left, fires were also burning, but it was obvious that these belonged to the 3rd Corps, which, towards eight o'clock, had turned the corner of the forest, after having driven back the Prussians, and who had remained in some village at a good distance from Fleurus. Some fires along the margin of the wood, on the same line with us, also belonged to our army; I think I remember that we had troops on both sides, but I am not quite sure; but I am sure the great mass was on our left.

Sentinels were immediately posted in the environs, and then every man lay down on the margin of the wood, without lighting any fires, and waited for further orders.

General Schoeffer came back once more that night with some hussar officers; Commandant Gémeau was watching, fully equipped, and they talked together, quite loudly, within twenty feet of us. The general said that our army corps was still defiling, but was very much behind time, and would not have completely arrived even by the next day; and I afterwards found that he was right; for our 4th Battalion, which was to have met us at Chatelet, did not arrive till the day after the battle, when we had been almost exterminated by those rascals at Ligny, and had only four hundred men left; whereas, if it had been there, we should have joined together, and it would have had its share of glory.

As I had been on guard the night before, I stretched myself quietly at the foot of a tree, by the side of Buche, with our comrades around me. It was about one o'clock in the morning. This was to be the day of the terrible battle of Ligny. Half of those who were sleeping around us were to leave their bones in these villages where we saw the fires burning, or in these great plains, so rich in all kinds of growing crops; they were to fertilise the fields for centuries for the growth of wheat, barley, and oats. If they had known this, not one of them would have slept so well; for men love their lives, and it would be sad if men were to think, "To-day we shall breathe for the last time!"

## CHAPTER XVIII

During this night the air was heavy and, although I was very sleepy, I awoke every hour. My comrades were sleeping and some of them talked in their sleep. Buche never moved. Close to us, our muskets, arranged in stacks, shone in the moonlight.

I listened. In the distance, on the left, we could hear cries of " Qui vive? " and in our front, cries of " Wer da? "

Much nearer to us could be seen the sentinels of our battalion standing quite still at two hundred paces' distance, half hidden in the corn. I got up quietly and looked round. In the distance of Sombref, at least two leagues on our right, there were many sounds, which increased and decreased, and then suddenly ceased. It sounded like gusts of wind among the leaves. There was not a breath of wind, nor was there a drop of dew, and I thought, " They are the guns and ammunition waggons of the Prussians galloping about, on the road to Namur, and fresh squadrons and battalions continually arriving. Mon Dieu, what a position we shall be in to-morrow, with that mass of men before us, increased and reinforced from hour to hour! "

They had extinguished their fires at Saint Amand and Ligny, but in the direction of Sombref there were more fires than ever! Prussian regiments, who had come up by forced marches, were no doubt cooking their soup. Innumerable thoughts passed through my head, but I laid myself down again, and slept for half an hour. Frequently I said to myself, " You have escaped from Lutzen, Leipsic, and Hanau; why should you not surmount this too? "

But these hopes thus cherished did not prevent me from perceiving that it would be a terrible time.

At length I fell asleep, when Padoue, the drum-major, began to beat the reveille. He walked up and down by the edge of the wood and seemed to greatly enjoy using his drumsticks. The officers were already assembled on a hill among the corn, and were looking towards Fleurus and talking to each other.

Our reveille is always sounded before that of the Russians, Prussians, and Austrians, and all our other enemies; it is like the song of the lark at the first dawning of day. The others,

with their unwieldy drums, begin after sombre rolls that remind you of a funeral. But their trumpets have pretty airs to sound reveille, while ours give only three or four sharp notes, as if to say, " En route! We have no time to lose!"

Every one jumped up. The magnificent sun was rising over the cornfields, and one could feel already how hot it would be towards noon. Buche, and all those who were to do fatigue duty, went away with their buckets to bring water, while others shook lighted tow into a handful of straw to light the fires. There was plenty of wood, for everybody got an armful if he asked for it. Corporal Duhem, Sergeant Rabot, and Zebedee came to talk to us. We had all gone out together in 1813; they had been at my wedding at Quatre Vents, and, in spite of the difference of rank, they always were as friendly as ever to Joseph.

" Well," cried Zebedee to me, " so the dance is going to begin again? "

" Yes," I replied. And remembering all at once the words of poor Sergeant Pinto, on the morning of Lutzen, I replied, with a wink of my eye, " See here, Zebedee, as Sergeant Pinto said, it will be a battle where one may win the cross by means of the musket-stock and the bayonet; and if one has not the luck to get it, one must not count upon it any more! "

Then they all began to laugh, and Zebedee said, " Yes, poor old fellow, he deserved it well; but it is more difficult to reach than the top of the greasy pole at a fair."

We all laughed, and as they had a gourd of brandy, we broke a crust together, as we watched the movements of the troops, which began to be visible. Buche had returned, one of the first, with his bucket. He stood behind us with his ears pricked up, like a fox on the look-out. Files of horsemen were coming out of the wood and crossing the plain in the direction of Saint Amand, the big village on the left of Fleurus.

" That," said Zebedee, " is the light cavalry of Pajol, about to deploy in skirmishing order; those yonder are Exelman's dragoons. When the others have reconnoitred the position they will advance in line, I can safely predict; it is always done in the same manner, and the guns will arrive with the infantry. Then the cavalry will move to the right or to the left, it will retire upon the wings, and the infantry will be in the first line. The attacking columns will be formed on the good roads and in the fields, and the affair will begin with a cannonade for twenty minutes or half-an-hour, more or less; the first firing is always between the artillerymen. When they have had enough of it,

and half the batteries are dismounted, the emperor chooses a good moment to send us out; but then we get our share of bullets as we come nearer. We advance in quick time, in good order, with shouldered arms, and we always finish at the double, because of the bullets, which make us impatient. I tell you all this, conscripts, so that you may not be surprised when it comes."

More than twenty conscripts had taken their places around us. The cavalry still continued emerging from the wood.

"I'll bet," said Corporal Duhem, "that the 4th Corps has been on the march behind us ever since daybreak."

And Rabot said that it would require time for them to get into line, because of the bad places they had to cross in order to reach the wood.

We were like generals deliberating among themselves; we also looked at the position of the Prussians around the villages, in the orchards, and behind the hedges, which are six or seven feet high in this country. Many of their cannon had been set up in batteries between Ligny and Saint Amand; one could plainly see the reflection of the sun on their bronze, which made one think seriously of many things.

"I am sure," said Zebedee, "that they have provided for themselves everywhere; that they have dug ditches, and pierced holes in the walls, and that it would have been a good thing to have pushed forward last night, when their squares retreated, to the first village on the heights. If we were on a level with them all would go well; but to climb over hedges, under the enemy's fire, that costs men, unless something is behind it, according to the emperor's habit."

In this way the old soldiers were talking all around us; and the conscripts listened eagerly.

Meanwhile the soup-kettles were hanging over the fires; but we were expressly forbidden to use our bayonets in the cooking, for it would blunt them.

It might be seven o'clock, and everybody thought the battle would be fought at Saint Amand, the village that was most on our left, surrounded with hedges and tufted trees, with a great round tower in the centre; and higher up in the rear, some more houses, with a winding road bordered with rough stones on all sides. The officers said, "The affair will be out yonder."

They said so because our troops, coming from Charleroi, were assembling in the plain below; infantry and cavalry, all were moving in that direction—the whole corps of Vandamme

and Gérard's division. Thousands and thousands of helmets glittered in the sun. Buche, who stood near me, said, "Oh! oh! oh!—look, Joseph, look!—there are still more of them coming."

Innumerable lines of bayonets could be seen in the same direction, as far as one could see.

The Prussians extended their lines more and more on the ridge, behind the village, where the windmills stood.

This movement lasted till seven o'clock. Nobody felt hungry, but we ate in order that we might not regret it afterwards, for when a battle has once begun you have to wait until it is over, if it should last for two days.

Between eight and nine o'clock the 1st Battalion of our division also emerged from the wood. The officers shook hands with their comrades, but the staff still remained behind.

Suddenly we saw some hussars and chasseurs pass by to lengthen our line of battle on the right; they were Morin's cavalry. The idea at once occurred to us that when the battle began in the direction of Saint Amand, and the Prussians had directed all their forces on that side, we should fall on their flank by the village of Ligny. But the same idea occurred to the Prussians, for from that moment they did not defile as far as Saint Amand, but stopped at Ligny; they even came lower down; and we could plainly see their officers stationing soldiers among the hedges, in the gardens, behind low walls, and in outbuildings. We considered their position a very strong one. They continued to descend into a hollow of the ground between Ligny and Fleurus, and that surprised us, for we did not yet know that a rivulet flows lower down, dividing the village into two parts; that they were then fortifying the houses on our side; and we did not know that if we were so fortunate as to drive them back they would have a better position, and would still keep us under fire.

If one knew everything beforehand, in affairs of this kind, one would never dare to begin, because there would seem no hope of succeeding in such a dangerous enterprise; but these things only show themselves by degrees, and we were this day to discover many that we did not expect.

About half-past eight o'clock several of our regiments had passed the wood; soon the rappel was sounded, and all the battalions were under arms. General Count Gérard and his staff came up. They galloped on to the hill above Fleurus, without taking any notice of us.

Almost immediately the firing began. Some *tirailleurs* of Vandamme's corps approached the village, on the left; two pieces of artillery started soon afterwards, driven by mounted artillerymen. They fired five or six rounds from the top of the hill; then the firing ceased; our sharpshooters were at Fleurus, and we saw four or five hundred Prussians ascend the ridge beyond, towards Ligny.

General Gérard looked at this little engagement; then he removed with his staff officers, and passed slowly in front of our battalions, looking at us thoughtfully, as if to inspect our appearance. He was a dark man, with a round face and a large head; he might be about forty-five years old; the lower part of his face was broad, with a pointed chin. One sees many peasants at home who resemble him; and they are not the most stupid. He said nothing to us; and when he had traversed our line from one end to the other, all the commandants and the colonels assembled on our right. We were ordered to stand at ease, the staff officers were flying about like the wind; one could see them in all directions; but no one else moved. Only a rumour spread that Marshal Grouchy was in command over us, and that the emperor was attacking the English, four leagues away, on the road to Brussels.

This news did not put us in good-humour; we said, "It is not astonishing that we have been here since the morning doing nothing; if the emperor were with us the battle would have begun long ago; the Prussians would not have had time to arrange their positions."

That was what they said; and it shows how unjust men are; for three hours afterwards, about noon, thousands of voices began to cry, "Vive l'Empereur!" on the left; Napoleon was coming. These cries came rushing onward like a mighty wind, and were soon prolonged as far as opposite to Sombref. We thought all was now well; and that for which we had reproached Marshal Grouchy, we now considered excellent because the emperor did it.

The order came immediately for us to advance five hundred paces, bearing to the right, and we marched across the fields, the barley and corn, rye and oats, bending before us. The great line of battle never seemed to move.

We were moving towards a great road that we had not yet seen, and when we had come within a thousand paces of Fleurus, with its rivulets bordered by willows, we heard a cry, "Halt!"

Through the whole division there ran a murmur, "Here he is!"

The emperor was coming, on horseback, surrounded by a small staff; in the distance, one could only recognise him by his grey capote and his hat; his carriage, surrounded by lancers, was some distance behind. He entered Fleurus by the high road, and rested in the village more than an hour, while we stood roasting in the cornfields.

When the hour was over, and we began to think that this would never end, some orderly officers rode away, with loosened rein, bending their heads forward between their horses' ears; two of them stopped when they came to General Count Gérard; one stayed with him, and the other rode on his way. After that, we had to wait again; and then, on a sudden, from one end of the line to the other, the bands of the regiments began to play. There was a great noise of drums and trumpets, and we began to march. The great line that extended far behind Saint Amand to the wood began to move with the right wing in advance. As it passed behind our division, we made an oblique movement towards the right; and then came another cry, "Halt!"

We were opposite the road which leads out of Fleurus. There was a white wall on our left; behind this wall rose some trees and a big house, and before us a red brick windmill like a great tower.

As soon as we halted the emperor came out of this mill with three or four generals, and two peasants in blouses, old men, carrying their cotton caps in their hands. Then the division shouted "Vive l'Empereur!" and I had a good view of him, for he was advancing just opposite to the battalion, by a footpath, with his arms crossed behind his back and his head bent, listening to something one of the bald old peasants was saying. He took no notice of our cheers; twice he turned round, and pointed to the village of Ligny. I saw him as plainly as I used to see Father Goulden, when we sat opposite each other at the table. He had grown stouter and sallower since the days of Leipsic; if it had not been for his grey capote and his hat, I think it would have been difficult to recognise him; he looked much older, and his cheeks were flabby. This was no doubt caused by the regrets he felt in the island of Elba, thinking of all the faults he had committed; for he was a man who had plenty of good sense, and could perceive his failings plainly. He had destroyed the revolution that had set him up; he had called home the emigrants who would have nothing to do with him; he

had married an arch-duchess who lived in Vienna; he had chosen his greatest enemies for his counsellors. In fact, he had put everything back into the state in which it was before the revolution; nothing was wanting to complete it but Louis XVIII., and at last the kings had put Louis XVIII. in his place. Now he had come back in order to overthrow the legitimate monarch; some called him a despot, and others a Jacobin. It was unfortunate, especially as he himself had made matters easy for the recall of the Bourbons. He had nothing left now but his army; if he lost this, he lost everything; because in the nation, some wanted liberty, like Father Goulden, and others wanted peace and quietness, like Aunt Grethel and myself, and all those who were carried off to the war.

These things must have made him reflect terribly. He had lost everybody's confidence. The old soldiers alone retained their attachment to him; they were ready to conquer or to die, and with such ideas one is sure to achieve one or other of these objects, and all is very simple and clear; but many people had very different ideas, and for my part I cared much more for Catherine than for the emperor.

When he came to the corner of the wall, where the hussars were waiting for him, he mounted his horse; and General Gérard, who had seen him, rode down at a gallop into the highway. He turned round for a few moments to listen to the general, and then they rode into Fleurus together.

And again we had to wait.

About two o'clock General Gérard came back again. We were ordered to incline to the right for the third time; and the whole division marched in columns along the high road of Fleurus, the guns and artillery waggons occupying the intervals between the brigades. No one can imagine what a terrible dust there was. Buche said to me, "At the first pond we come to I must have a drink, cost what it may."

But we did not see any water.

The bands continued to play. Behind us came masses of cavalry, chiefly of dragoons. We were still marching, when the roll of musketry and the booming of guns began; it sounded like the bursting of a dyke, when the water comes rushing down and carries everything before it.

I knew what it was, but Buche turned quite pale. He said nothing, but looked at me with an astonished air.

"Yes, yes, Jean," I said; "the others yonder are beginning the attack on Saint Amand; but our turn will soon come."

The rolling noise redoubled. The bands had ceased to play, and on all sides arose the cry, "Halt!"

The division stopped on the main road; the gunners came forward from the intervals, and put their pieces in position, fifty paces in front of us, with the limbers behind them.

We were standing opposite to Ligny. Nothing was to be seen but a white line of houses, half hidden by orchards, the steeple rising above them, banks of reddish earth, trees, hedges, and palisades. We had twelve to fifteen thousand men, excluding the cavalry; and we waited for the order to attack.

The battle in the direction of Saint Amand continued; and masses of smoke rose into the sky.

While we were waiting for our turn, I thought with great tenderness of Catherine; the idea that she would have a child came into my mind, and I prayed to God to preserve my life; but the happy thought also came to me that, if I should die, our child would be there to console them all—Catherine, Aunt Grethel, and Father Goulden; that if it should be a boy, they would call him Joseph, and caress him; that Father Goulden would nurse him on his knees, that Aunt Grethel would love him, and that Catherine, when she embraced him, would think of me. I said to myself that I should not be altogether dead. But I preferred to live, for all that, and I felt sure this would be a terrible affair.

Buche, too, said to me, "Listen to me. I have a cross—if I am killed;—you must promise me something." And he took my hand and shook it.

"I promise you," I answered.

"Then listen; it is here, on my breast. I want you to carry it back to Harberg, and have it hung up in the chapel, in memory of Jean Buche, who died believing in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

He spoke seriously, and I thought his request a very natural one; for some die for the rights of man, others die thinking of their mother, and others justify themselves by the example of these just men who sacrificed themselves for their fellows; it is all the same kind of thing, though people call it by different names, according to their point of view.

I promised to do what he asked; and we waited for almost another half-hour. All who came out of the wood took up a position close to us; we also saw the cavalry deploying on our right, as if to attack Sombref.

On our side, till half-past two, not a musket-shot had been

fired, when suddenly an aide-de-camp of the emperor came riding up at full gallop; and I thought directly, "Here's our turn coming! Now may God watch over us; for we, poor creatures, are unable to save ourselves from a massacre like this!"

I had hardly had time to make these reflections, when two battalions set out on the road with some artillery, on the right of the high road in the direction of Sombref, where the Prussian uhlans and hussars were forming in line opposite our dragoons. These two battalions had the luck to remain all day in position on the road, watching the enemy's cavalry, while we had to take the village where the Prussians were waiting in force.

The columns for the attack were formed just as it was striking three o'clock. I was in the left column, which advanced first at the quick march along a winding road. In the direction of Ligny we saw a great brick building; it was round, and pierced with holes; it looked upon the road by which we were mounting, and we looked at it over the cornfields. The second, or centre column, started after us, because it had not so far to go, and advanced straight forward; we were to meet it at the entrance of the village. I do not know when the third column started, for we did not meet it until later.

Everything went well till we came to a place where the road cuts through a little hill, and leads down into the village. Just as we entered the space between the two mounds, covered with corn, and saw the foremost houses, a veritable hail of bullets descended on the head of our columns with a terrible noise; from every hole in the great brick building, from every window and every loophole in the houses, from the hedges, the orchards, across the low walls of stone, the firing came flashing upon us like lightning. At the same time, from a field behind the high tower on the left, and higher than Ligny, in the direction of the windmills, fifteen heavy guns, posted for that purpose, opened fire with a roar compared to which the sound of the fusilade was, so to speak, nothing at all. Those who, unfortunately, had already passed the valley, fell upon one another in heaps, in the smoke. And at the moment when this happened to us, we also heard the fire of the other column opening upon our right, and the roaring of other cannon; and we did not know whether they belonged to us, or if the Prussians were firing.

Fortunately, the battalion had not yet entirely passed the hill; the bullets whistled and the cannon-balls roared through the cornfields over our heads, ploughing up the ground, but doing us no harm. Each time such a volley passed over us,

the conscripts near me bowed their heads. I remembered that Buche looked at me with great eyes. The old soldiers set their lips tight.

The column halted. Each one was thinking whether it would not be better to go down again; but this only lasted for a second. The moment the fusilade appeared to cease, all the officers, waving their swords in the air, began to cry, "Forward!"

And the column started off again at the double. It threw itself first into the road which leads down across the hedges, over the palisades and walls where the Prussians, in ambush, continued to fire at us. It was a bad day for those whom we overtook! They defended themselves like wolves, but our muskets and bayonets soon stretched them in a corner. A large number of them, veterans, with grey moustaches, had prepared for retreat; they retired with a firm step, turning at intervals to fire another shot, and shutting a door behind them, or crouching in a hollow. We followed them persistently; we retained no prudence nor mercy; and at last we arrived, all in disorder, at the first houses, where the firing was reopened upon us from the windows, the corners of the streets, and everywhere.

There were certainly orchards and gardens, with walls of loose stone that reached along the ridge of the hill, but they were all torn up and knocked to pieces, and the palisades had been torn up, and could no longer give us shelter. Those in the buildings in front, well barricaded, continued a rolling fire upon us. In ten minutes these Prussians would have exterminated us to the last man. Seeing this, the column began to retire—drummers, sappers, officers, and soldiers, all pell-mell, without stopping to look round. As for me. I leaped over palisades, in places where, never in my life, should I have had the conceit to think I could have managed, especially with my knapsack and cartridge-box at my back; and all the others did the same; we all melted away like a crumbling wall.

When once we had reached the shelter of the dip, between the hills, we stopped to take breath, for we badly needed it. Many lay down on the ground, and others leaned with their backs against the fence. The officers scolded us, just as if they had not themselves followed our retreating movement; many of them cried out, "Let the cannon advance!" others wanted the ranks to be formed again; and one could hardly hear oneself amid the terrible roaring of the cannonade, in which the air trembled as in a thunderstorm.

I saw Buche coming back with long strides; his bayonet was quite red with blood; he took his place beside me in silence, and reloaded his musket.

More than a hundred men of the battalion, Captain Grégoire, Lieutenant Certain, and several sergeants and corporals had been left in the orchards; the first two battalions of the column had suffered equally with ourselves.

Zebedee, with his great hooked nose quite white, perceived me from a distance, and called out, "Joseph! no quarter!"

Masses of white smoke rolled over the hills. The whole ridge, from Ligny to Saint Amand, behind the willows, aspens, and poplars that bordered the road, seemed to be made of fire.

I had climbed to the level of the cornfields, grasping the ground with my hands; and seeing this terrible spectacle—seeing also, at the top of the ridge, near the mills, long black lines of infantry, fully armed, ready to come down upon us, with innumerable cavalry on the wings, I came down again, thinking: "We shall never defeat that army. It fills the villages, it guards the roads, it covers the ridge as far as one can see, and has cannon everywhere; it is unreasonable to persist in such an enterprise."

I felt indignant with our generals, and even disgusted with them.

All this had happened in less than ten minutes. God knows what had become of the other columns; all the great fusilade coming from the left, and the volleys of bullets that we heard whistling through the air, were doubtless meant for them.

I thought we had already had our full share of misfortunes, when General Gérard and two other generals named Vichery and Schoeffer came galloping up from the road below us, crying furiously, "Forward! Forward!"

They pointed with their sabres, and to see them one would have thought it the easiest thing to go on. These are the kind of obstinate persons who drive others to destruction, because their fury extends to everybody else.

Our guns on the road below, at this moment, opened fire upon Ligny; the roofs of the village crumbled, the walls came crashing down; and we immediately began to advance again, the generals in front, sword in hand, and the drummers behind us beating the charge. There were shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" Prussian bullets struck us down by dozens, the balls flew round us like hail, and the drums kept beating pang! pang! pang! We seemed to see and to hear nothing as we ran forward through

the orchards; those who fell received little attention, and two minutes afterwards we entered the village, breaking in the doors with our muskets, while the Prussians fired at us from the windows. It was an uproar a thousand times worse than that without, because cries of fury were mingled with it; we rushed into the houses with our bayonets; and there was a general massacre without mercy. On all sides only one cry was heard, "No quarter!"

The Prussians we surprised in the first houses did not ask for quarter. They were all old soldiers who knew the meaning of the cry, "No quarter!" They defended themselves to the death.

I remember that at the third or fourth house of a fairly big street, which passes in front of the church, and afterwards leads to a little bridge, I remember that opposite to this house, on the right, while great bent tiles, and slates, and bricks were raining down into the streets, and the fires lit up by our bomb-shells filled the air with smoke, and when all was shouting, whistling, and shrieking around us, Zebedee seized me by the arm with a terrible glance, and shouted, "Come on!"

And then we rushed into the house, where the great lower room, quite dark because the windows had been barricaded with sacks of earth, was already full of soldiers. One could perceive at the back a very steep staircase of wood, down which blood was dripping; musket shots were being fired from above, and the flashes showed, from one moment to another, five or six of our men leaning wounded against the balustrades, and others passing over their bodies, charging with the bayonet to force an entrance into the garret.

It was a horrible thing to see all these men, with their moustaches, their brown cheeks, and fury painted all over their faces, trying with all their might to get up. When I saw this, I don't know what rage seized me, so that I began to cry, "Forward! No quarter!"

If I had had the misfortune to be near the staircase, I might have tried to mount, and have got myself hacked to pieces. Fortunately, every one had the same wish, and not one of them would have given up his place to me. It was an old soldier, all covered with wounds, who mounted amid the bayonets. On arriving at the garret he threw down his musket, stretched out his arms, and clung with both hands to the balustrade; two bullets, fired at him point blank, could not make him go back; and behind him three or four others, who strove with

each other to get up first, threw him into the room as they rushed up the last steps.

Then we heard from upstairs an uproar that cannot be described; gunshots followed each other in close succession in the narrow room, and there was such a noise that it seemed as if the house were coming down in one great crush; and other soldiers kept running up! When I got up, behind Zebedee, the whole place was blocked up with dead and wounded men, the windows opposite had been broken in, the walls were splashed with blood, there was not a Prussian left alive, and five or six of our men were leaning against pieces of furniture, smiling and looking on with a ferocious air; they nearly all of them had bullets in their bodies, or had received bayonet-thrusts, but the joy of vengeance was stronger than the pain of their wounds. When I think of that scene, it makes my hair stand on end.

As soon as Zebedee saw that the Prussians were really dead, he went down, calling to me, "Come on! There is nothing to be done here!"

And we went out. Outside, the column had already gone past the church; thousands of shot rained on the bridge, sounding like a charcoal stove when it is crackling. The second column, going down the main street on the right, had united with ours; while one of those big columns of Prussians that I had seen on the ridge behind Ligny was coming down to eject us from the village. There it was that we and the enemy met for the first time in masses. Two staff officers were rushing through the street from which we came.

"Those men," said Zebedee, "are going to order up the guns. When we have cannon here, Joseph, you shall see if they can turn us out."

He ran on, and I followed.

The engagement continued near the bridge. Five o'clock sounded from the old church; we had then exterminated all the Prussians on this side of the brook, except those who had barricaded themselves in the large brick building on the left, shaped like a tower, and with its sides pierced with holes. Some shells had set it on fire at the top, but below the fusilade continued; and we had to avoid that direction.

In front of the church we were in force; we found the little square crowded with troops, who stood with shouldered arms, ready to march; still more had arrived in a large street that traverses Ligny throughout its whole length. The head of one column was still engaged opposite the little bridge. The

Prussians were trying to drive us back; file-firing continued incessantly, like the dropping of water. On the square, one could see nothing through the smoke but bayonets, the façade of the church, generals standing on the steps in front giving their orders, staff officers galloping away, and in the air the old slate-covered steeple, round which the crows were flying, terrified at all this uproar.

The cannon of Saint Amand sounded all the time. Between the gables on the left one could see on the ridge long blue lines, and masses of cavalry moving in the direction of Sombref, to turn our flank. Yonder, behind us, there were to be hand-to-hand combats between the uhlans and our hussars. How many of those uhlans we saw stretched on the plains next day!

Our battalion having suffered most, passed into the second line. We found our company again as soon as Captain Florentin commanded. Cannon were also coming along the same street; the horses galloped along, foaming and shaking their heads furiously; the guns and the limbers crushed everything. All this of course made a great uproar; and amid the roaring of the cannon and the rattle of the musketry one could distinguish nothing. All the soldiers were shouting, and some of them were singing, with their hand in air and their muskets on their shoulders; but one could only tell it by seeing their open mouths.

I had taken my place next to Buche, and was beginning to breathe freely, when all were set in motion again.

This time it was necessary to pass the rivulet, to drive the Prussians out of Ligny, to mount the ridge behind, and to cut their army in two; and then the battle would be won! Every one could understand that; but with the mass of troops which the enemy held in reserve, it was no small matter.

All marched forward to attack the bridge; no one could see anything but the five or six men before him. I was glad to hear that the column extended a long way in front.

What I liked better still was that in the middle of the street, in front of a barn whose door had been beaten in, Captain Florentin halted the company, and that the remains of the battalion were posted in these half-ruined structures, to support the attacking column by firing from the windows.

We had fifteen men in this barn, and even now I think I see myself and the rest, mounting by a ladder through a square hole; and I see the two or three dead Prussians down by the

wall, and the old door, riddled with bullets, hanging only by one of its hinges, and at the back a loophole looking upon the other street behind. Zebedee commanded our party; Lieutenant Bretonville established himself with another detachment in the house opposite, and Captain Florentin went somewhere else.

The street was lined with troops as far as the two corners by the brook.

The first thing we tried to do was to set up the door again, and strengthen it; but we had hardly begun this work when a terrible noise was heard in the street; the walls, shutters, and tiles all came tumbling down together, and two men of our party, who had remained outside to prop up the door, fell as if mown down with a scythe. At the same time, in the distance, near the brook, the footsteps of the retreating column were heard rumbling over the bridge; while ten discharges similar to the first roared through the air, and made one regard things seriously. This noise came from six guns loaded with grape-shot, which Blücher had masked at the end of the street, and which were then opening fire upon us.

The whole column, drummers, soldiers, officers, on foot and on horseback, falling over each other and pushing one another down, came rushing by like a hurricane. Nobody looked behind him; those who fell were lost men. Hardly had the last of them passed our door when Zebedee leaned out to look, and immediately cried out in a terrible voice, "The Prussians!"

He fired his musket. Several of us were already on the ladder; but before I thought of climbing up, the Prussians were there; Zebedee, Buche, and all who had not time to get up kept them off with their bayonets. I fancy I can still see those Prussians, with their long moustaches, their red faces, and their low shakos, furious at being stopped. I never had such a shock. Zebedee shouted, "No quarter!" as if we had been the stronger party. Directly afterwards he received a blow on the head from the butt-end of a musket.

I saw that he was going to be massacred, and it made my heart stand still. I ran out shouting, "à la baïonette."

And we all ran together upon those rascals, while our comrades fired from above, and from the houses opposite a fusilade was opened upon them.

Then the Prussians gave way, but farther on a whole battalion was coming up. Buche took Zebedee on his shoulders and ran

up the ladder. We had barely time to follow him, calling out to him to make haste.

We helped him to climb as well as we could. I was the last but one. I thought the ladder would never end; and here was a terrible thing: when we came to draw it up, amid bullets from below that shattered the head of one of our comrades, we found it was too large to go into the loft. This made us all turn pale. Then Zebedee, who was recovering, said to us, "Why don't you put a musket through the rungs?"

And this idea seemed to us an inspiration from above.

But you should have heard the uproar that was going on below. The whole street was full of Prussians, and so was our barn. These people were mad with rage; they were worse than we, and kept on crying out, "No prisoners!"

Our firing made them angry; they forced open the doors, and one could hear fighting in the houses, and heavy falls, and curses in French and in German, shouts of command by Lieutenant Bretonville opposite, and the Prussian officers crying to their men to find straw to set the place on fire. Fortunately the fields had not yet been reaped, otherwise they would have burnt us all together.

They fired into the floor of our loft; but it was made of good oaken planks, and the balls rattled against them like blows with a hammer. We, standing behind one another, continued firing down into the street, and every shot told.

It seemed that these people had retaken the square before the church, for now we could only hear the noise of the firing at a distance. We were left alone, two or three hundred men, surrounded by three or four thousand.

Then I said to myself, "It is all over with you, Joseph. You will never escape from this,—it is impossible."

And I did not dare to think of Catherine, for my heart wept. There was no chance of retreat for us. The Prussians held both ends of the street and the lanes behind it; they had already retaken some houses. But all was silent. They were preparing something; they were looking for hay, straw, and faggots, or they were bringing their guns forward to annihilate us.

Our sharpshooters looked out of the loophole, but could see nothing, for the street was empty. This silence around was more terrible than the tumult just before.

Zebedee had got up again; the blood was coming from his mouth and nose.

"Attention!" said he. "We shall have to look out for an attack—the rascals are preparing! Load your guns!"

Scarcely had he uttered the words when the whole house, from the roof to the foundations, was shaken as if it was all sinking into the earth—beams, laths, and slates all came tumbling down with the shock; while a red flame rose from beneath our feet to the top of the roof.

We all retreated. A lighted bombshell, that the Prussians had rolled into the barn, had just burst.

When I got up again, there was a roaring in my ears; but, for all that, I could see a ladder raised against our loophole, and Buche making desperate thrusts with his bayonet at something outside.

The Prussians wanted to take advantage of our surprise to rush in and massacre us; the sight made me cold, and I ran forward to help Buche.

Those of our comrades who had not been killed also came running up, crying, "Vive l'Empereur!"

And then I seemed to hear nothing more. The noise must have been terrible, for the fusilade from below and from the windows lit up all the street like a rolling fire. We had thrown down the ladder, and there were still six of us left—two in front, who continued firing, and four behind them, who loaded and handed them the muskets.

In this extremity I had become calm, and resigned myself to my misfortune, just thinking, "Try to save your life!" The others, no doubt, had the same thought.

This terrible crisis lasted about a quarter of an hour, and then the cannon began to thunder again, and our comrades in front ceased firing, and leaned out of the window.

My cartridge-box was nearly empty, and I took more cartridges from the dead bodies.

The cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" were now heard, and they came nearer. All at once the head of our column, with its flag all black and torn, was seen advancing along the little square, and turning into our street.

The Prussians were retreating. We would have all come down, but two or three times our column wavered before the musketry fire that met it. The cries and the cannonade were again intermingled. Zebedee, who was looking out, at last ran to climb down the ladder; our column was passing by the barn, and we all came down, one after another, without looking at our comrades, who had been torn by the fragments of the

bomb, and several of whom cried out to us in heartrending tones to carry them with us.

But that is the character of men: the fear of being taken makes them barbarous.

Long afterwards these abominable things came back upon us. One would then give anything to have had courage and humanity; but it is too late.

## CHAPTER XIX

And thus it was that six of us went out of the barn into which fifteen had gone an hour before. Buche and Zebedee were both among the survivors; the Phalsbourg men had been lucky.

Once outside, we had to follow the attacking party.

We marched on over a heap of dead men; all was soft under our feet. No one looked down to see if he was stepping on the face of a wounded man, or on his chest, or his limbs; we only marched onward. The next day we learned that this mass of Prussians, crowded together in the street, had been swept away by some guns of the battery in front of the church; the pertinacity of these people had caused their ruin.

Blucher was waiting for the moment to do as much for us; but instead of passing over the bridge we were made to incline to the right and occupy the houses that border the stream. The Prussians were firing at us from all the windows opposite. When we were entrenched in the houses we opened fire upon their pieces, and this forced them to give way.

There was already a talk of our attacking the other part of the village, when the rumour spread that a column of Prussians, numbering fifteen to twenty thousand, was coming from Charleroi in our rear. No one could understand this; for we had swept the whole region from the banks of the Sambre; this column, which was falling upon our rear, must, therefore, have been concealed in the woods.

It might then be about half-past six o'clock; the conflict at Saint Amand seemed to increase. Blucher was directing all his force that way. The moment was favourable for taking the other part of the village; but this column forced us to wait.

The rows of houses on each side of the brook were lined with troops; on the right were the French, on the left the Prussians. The firing had ceased, though scattered shots still continued, but they were a long way off. One side seemed to say to the other, "Let us take breath! Presently we shall have another fight!"

The Prussians, in the houses opposite, with their blue coats and leather shakos, and their moustaches curled up, were old soldiers, strong men, with square chins, and with their ears

standing out from their heads. One would have thought they could overturn us at a blow. Their officers, too, were watching us.

Along the two streets which followed the brook, and in the brook itself, there were long, uninterrupted lines of corpses. Many were sitting with their backs against the wall; they were such as had been dangerously wounded during the fight, and having still the strength to drag themselves out of the midst of it, had leaned against the wall, where they had died from loss of blood. In the stream many were standing upright, with their hands grasping the bank, as if to climb out; but they never moved, and in the dark corners into which the rays of the sun descended, one could see poor wretches crushed under ruins, with beams and great stones resting upon their bodies.

The combat of Saint Amand became more terrible; the constant thundering of the cannon seemed to fill the air, and if we had not all been face to face with death, we could not have refrained from admiring the magnificent uproar.

At each discharge hundreds of men were killed; and there was no cessation, so that the earth itself trembled.

We had time to breathe now; but soon we felt an extraordinary thirst. While we had been fighting no one had felt this horrible thirst; but now every one wanted to drink.

Our house was at the corner on the left of the bridge, and the little water that rolled through the mud was red with blood. But between our house and the next, in the middle of a little garden, there was a well; and we all looked at this well with its windlass and two wooden supports. In spite of the hail of bullets, the two buckets still hung by the chain. Three men, their faces towards the ground, and their hands stretched out in front of them, were lying in the path which led to this spot; they had also wanted to drink, and the Prussians had killed them.

So we all stood with out muskets beside us, looking at the well. One said, "I would give half my blood for a glass of water."

Another said, "Yes, but the Prussians are watching."

It was true. The Prussians, a hundred yards from us, and perhaps as thirsty as ourselves, had guessed what we thought. That was the cause of the shots that were still being fired. Whenever any one ventured into the long street, he was shot at directly; and thus each side made the other suffer terrible torments.

This continued at least half an hour, when the cannonade spread between Saint Amand and Ligny, and all at once we saw that they were firing grape-shot at the Prussians, between the two villages, for at every discharge there were gaps cut in their columns; this new attack produced a great agitation. Buche, who until this moment had not moved, now went by the lane into the garden, and ran to the well; he stood behind the margin, and the two houses opposite opened fire upon him, so that the stone and the posts were soon riddled with balls. But we very soon began to fire at the windows, and in another moment the fusilade had begun again from one end of the village to the other; the smoke floated everywhere.

At this moment a voice from below cried, "Joseph! Joseph!"

It was Buche; he had had the courage to draw up the bucket, to unhook it, and to bring it back with him, after drinking. Several of the old soldiers wanted to take the bucket from him; but he called out, "My comrade first! Let go, or I will spill it all!"

They were obliged to wait for me. I drank as much as I could, and then the rest followed, and those from above came down and drank till it was finished.

Thus Buche showed that he loved me. Then we went up together very well pleased.

I think it must then have been more than seven o'clock. The sun was setting. The shadows of the houses we were in lengthened till they reached to the stream; the houses occupied by the Prussians were lit up, as well as the ridge of Bry, from which fresh troops were pouring down quickly. The cannonade had never before been so heavy on our side.

Every one now knows that between seven and eight o'clock in the evening, as night was approaching, the emperor found that the column of Prussians which had been reported as being on our rear was in reality the corps of General Erlon that had lost its way between the army of Ney, fighting against the English at Quatre Bras, and ours, and that he immediately ordered the Old Guard to support us.

A lieutenant, who was with us, said, "The grand attack is going to begin! Attention!"

All the cavalry of the Prussians was pressing forward between the two villages. Without seeing it, we felt that there was a great movement behind us. The lieutenant repeated, "Attention to the word of command! No man is to remain behind

after the word of command has been given! Now comes the attack!"

So we were all attention.

The more the night advanced the more the sky grew red in the direction of Saint Amand. We had heard so much cannonading that we no longer paid attention to it, but at every discharge it looked as if the sky were on fire.

The uproar behind us increased All at once the great street that skirts the brook was full of our troops, from the bridge to the other end of Ligny. On the left, and farther off still, the Prussians were firing from the windows; but we no longer returned their fire. Then rose the cry, "The Guard! it is the Guard!"

I do not know how all that mass of men passed the dirty stream; it must have been upon planks, for in an instant our troops were on the left bank.

The great battery of the Prussians above the ravine, between the villages, tore gaps in our columns; but these gaps closed up at once, and our men began to pass on.

The remains of our column ran forward to the bridge, and mounted artillerymen, with their pieces, followed at a gallop.

Then we descended also; but we had not yet reached the bridge when the cuirassiers began to defile. After the cuirassiers came the dragoons and the mounted grenadiers of the Guard. They were advancing everywhere, and even beyond the village; it was like a new and innumerable army.

The massacre was beginning above; this time it was a battle in the open field. Night was coming on, and the Prussian squares appeared in lines of fire on the ridge.

We ran forward across the dead and wounded. Once clear of the village we saw what may be called a *mêlée* of cavalry; one could see nothing, so to speak, but white cuirasses flashing through lines of uhlans. All were mingled together, and then the cuirassiers reformed, and rode off steadily.

It was already dark, and the masses of smoke prevented one from seeing fifty paces in advance. We were all moving onwards towards the mills, the clatter of the galloping, the cries, the words of command, and the distant file-firing were all mingled together. Several squares had been broken. From time to time a flash of fire showed a few horsemen—a lancer leaning forward on his horse's neck, a cuirassier, with his wide white back, his helmet, and his waving horsehair plume, rushing forward like a cannon-ball, or two or three foot-soldiers running

amid the confusion, and all passed like a flash of lightning, and then the mangled cornfields were lit up for a moment, with the rain pouring from the sky, for a storm had just burst, and we could see the wounded lying crushed under the feet of the horses.

The remaining ten or twelve of the company, standing by the ruined houses, with our cartridge-boxes almost empty, did not know which way to turn. Zebedee, Captain Florentin, and Lieutenant Bretonville had disappeared, and Sergeant Rabot commanded us. He was an old man, withered, and small in stature, but as hard as iron. He must have had red hair when he was young. He winked, and whenever I speak of him, I fancy I hear him say, "The battle is won! Right file! Forward—march!"

Several asked permission to make the soup, for after twelve hours without eating they began to feel hungry; the sergeant, with his musket on his shoulder, walked down the lane, laughing slowly, and saying in a low voice, "The soup! the soup! Wait a little; the commissariat waggons will be here soon."

We followed him into the dark lane; towards the middle we saw a cuirassier on horseback, with his back towards us. He had received a sabre-thrust in the body, and had taken refuge here; the horse was leaning against the wall to prevent him from falling. As we passed by, he called to us, "Comrades!"

Nobody turned his head towards him. Twenty paces further on was an old building quite riddled with holes from shot, but with half the straw roof still undestroyed. Sergeant Rabot chose this as our post, and we entered the building in a row.

It was as dark as an oven. The sergeant burnt some powder, and then we saw it was a kitchen. The hearth was on the right, the staircase was on the left, and five or six Prussians and Frenchmen were stretched on the ground, as white as wax, with their eyes open.

"Come," said the sergeant, "here's our lodging; let every man make himself comfortable; our bed-fellows will not kick us."

As we saw that we must not count on any distribution of rations, every one unbuckled his knapsack in silence, put it on the ground by the wall, and lay down with his head upon it. Firing could still be heard, but very far off, on the ridge. The rain was falling in torrents. The sergeant fastened the creaking door, and then quietly lighted his pipe; some of the men were already smoking. I looked at him as he stood smoking by the little window, every pane of which was broken.

He was a stern but just man. He had three stripes, and

could read and write; he would have been a commissioned officer, because he had been wounded, but he was not well made. At last he too lay down with his head on his knapsack, and we were all asleep together.

We had been sleeping for a long time, when I was startled by a noise. Some one was hovering round the building. I leaned on my arm to listen, and directly after I heard some one try to open the door. Then I could not help crying out. "Well?" asked the sergeant.

And as the footsteps retreated quickly, he said, as he turned round, "Ah—the birds of night. Be off, you canailles; be off, or I will send a bullet after you."

He did not say anything more. For me, I had approached the window, and could see all along the lane robbers searching the dead and the wounded. They walked silently from one to another. The rain was falling in torrents; it was a horrible thing.

However, I lay down again, and was soon asleep after the great fatigue I had endured.

At break of day the sergeant was about, and cried, "En route."

We went out of the building, and marched up the lane. The cuirassier was lying on the ground, and his horse stood by him, waiting patiently.

The sergeant took the horse by the bridle, and led it a hundred paces into the orchard; then he took the bit out of its mouth and said, "Go and feed; they will catch you again presently." And the poor beast walked slowly away.

We marched quickly into a footpath that ran parallel to Ligny; ploughed fields and some plots of garden ground bordered this path. The sergeant looked round as we passed by; he stooped down to dig up some remains of carrots and turnips. I made haste to do the same, while our comrades pressed on, without turning their heads.

I then saw what a good thing it was to know the fruits of the earth; for I found two fine turnips and some carrots, which are very good eaten raw; and I followed the example of the sergeant, and put them into my shako.

Then I ran on to overtake the rest, who were hurrying towards the fires of Sombref.

I cannot give you an idea of the plain behind Ligny, where our cuirassiers and dragoons had hewn down everything before them. All around were heaps of men and horses, entangled, dead and wounded. Some of them lifted up their

hands to make signs to us; and the horses tried to get up, and crushed the poor wretches more than ever, as they fell back again.

Blood—nothing but blood! The track of the cannon-balls and of the grape-shot was marked in red lines on the ridges, as in our country the passage of the torrents is marked in the sand at the melting of the snows. Well, do you wish me to tell the truth? The truth is, that the sight hardly affected me at all.

Before I went to Lutzen, such a spectacle would have made me fall back fainting. I should have thought, "Do our masters look upon men as if they were animals? Did the good God intend us to be prey for wolves? Have we mothers, sisters, friends, beings who love us on earth, and will they not cry to Heaven for vengeance?"

"The strongest are always right. The emperor is the strongest, and beckons us to come; and in spite of everything we must come from Phalsbourg, Saverne, and other towns, take our places, and march. Whoever showed any signs of refusing would be at once shot. The marshals, generals, officers, sub-officers, and soldiers, from the first to the last, have to obey the word of command; they dare not move without orders, and the other people obey the army. It is the emperor who wills everything, who can do everything, and who settles everything. Well, and would not Joseph Bertha be foolish if he thought that the emperor could, for once in his life, do wrong? Is this not contrary to common sense?"

That is what we all thought; and if the emperor had kept his place, all France would have entertained the same idea until to-day.

One thing only pleased me, and it was that I had my carrots and turnips; for when we passed behind the bivouacs to ask where our battalion was, we learned that no distribution of provisions had taken place; they had received only a ration of brandy and some cartridges.

The old soldiers had gone out foraging for something to fill the soup-kettles. The conscripts, who did not yet know how to manage during a campaign, and who had already eaten their bread, as will frequently happen when one is twenty years old and has a good appetite—these were obliged to pass the time without wetting their spoons.

Towards seven o'clock we at last reached our bivouac. Zebedee seemed glad to see me. He came out to meet me, and said, "I am very glad to see you, Joseph; but what do you

bring? We have found a very fat kid, and we've some salt, too, but not a morsel of bread."

I showed him the rice I had, and my carrots and turnips. He said to me, "That is fine; we shall have the best soup of all the battalion."

I wanted Buche to eat with us too; and the six men of our party, who had all had the luck to escape with a few blows and scratches, consented. The drum-major Padoue said, laughing, "Old soldiers are always old soldiers; they never come with empty hands."

We glanced aside at the kettle of five conscripts, which was boiling near us; and seeing only rice in it, we winked at each other, for we had a good strong soup, which sent forth its savoury smell far around.

At eight o'clock we breakfasted, with what appetite may well be imagined. Not even on my wedding-day had I made a better meal; and it is satisfactory still when I think of it. When age comes one has no longer the enthusiasm of youth for such things; but they are always agreeable recollections. And this good meal sustained us for a long time; the poor conscripts, with their remnant of bread worked into a paste by the rain, were to see hard times next day, the 18th. We were destined to have a very short and terrible campaign. Well, all that is past now; but one does not think without emotion of these great hardships, and thanks God that one has survived them.

The weather seemed to be clearing up, the sun was beginning to shine again through the clouds. We had hardly finished eating when the rappel was beaten all along the line.

You must know that at this time the Prussians were only withdrawing their rear-guard from Sombref, and that it was a question of going in pursuit of them. Many even said that this ought to be done before anything else, and that our light cavalry should be sent far forward to bring in prisoners. But nobody listened to them, for the emperor knew very well what he was about.

I remember, however, that everybody was astonished, because it is usual to take advantage of victories. The veterans had never seen anything like this. It was supposed that the emperor meditated a grand *coup*, or that he had sent Ney to turn the enemy's flank, or something of that kind.

Meanwhile the roll-call began, and General Gérard came to review the 4th Corps. Our battalion had suffered most, because of the three attacks in which we had always been in

the front. We had Commandant Gémeau and Captain Vidal wounded; Captain Grégoire and Vignot killed; seven lieutenants and sub-lieutenants and 360 men killed, wounded, or missing.

Zebedee said that this was worse than at Montmirail and that we certainly should be reinforced before we set out.

Fortunately the 4th Battalion, under Commandant Delong, arrived from Metz and took our place in the line.

Captain Florentin, who commanded us, cried, "Left file!" and we went down to the village until we came near the church, where a number of carts were standing.

We were told off in detachments to superintend the removal of the wounded. Some companies of chasseurs were ordered to escort the convoys as far as Fleurus, because there was no room for them at Ligny; the church was already full of these unfortunates.

It was not we who picked out the wounded, but the military surgeons, and some local medical men who had been pressed into the service; it was too difficult to recognise a great number of wounded men among the dead. We had only to help to place them on straw in the carts.

I was used to this sort of thing ever since Lutzen. I knew what a man had to suffer before he is cured of a bullet-wound, a sabre-stroke, or a thrust such as our cuirassiers can give. Each time I saw one of these poor wretches carried off, I praised the Lord that I was not reduced to that condition; and when I thought that the same thing might have happened to me, I said to myself, "You don't know how many bullets and fragments of shell have passed close by you; if you did, the idea would fill you with horror."

I was astonished that so many of us had escaped this carnage, which was much worse than at Lutzen, or even at Leipsic; for the battle had only lasted five hours, and in many places the dead bodies lay in piles two or three feet high. The blood flowed out beneath these piles in rivulets. All the main street through which the guns passed was covered with red mud—with mud formed of crushed flesh and bones!

I am obliged to tell this, that the young people may know the truth. For me, I shall not go out to battle again. I am past the age, thank God! But all these young people, who think of nothing but war, instead of wanting to work honestly and help their old parents, ought to hear how men are treated. Let them think what must be the reflections of those unhappy wretches who have not done their duty, as they lie in a street

or on the road with a limb shot off, and hear the heavy cannons that weigh tons come rolling up, with the well-shod horses in front prancing and neighing.

This is the time when they will be sure to think of the poor old people who stretched out their arms after them in front of the little cottage in the village, when they turned and went away, saying, "I am going, and I shall return with a pair of epaulettes!"

Yes, yes; if they could weep and ask pardon of God, those poor fellows, one would see their tears and hear their cries. But it is too late then. The guns and the ammunition waggons, full of cannon-balls and shells, come thundering on; they can hear the bones cracking as the train comes rushing up and over their bodies, as if they were so much mud!

When one is old, and has children whom one loves, it is a horrible thing to think that misfortunes like these might happen to them. One would give one's last garment, to save them from having to go.

But it is of no use. Bad hearts are incorrigible, and good hearts do their duty. If misfortunes happen to the good, at least they have their confidence in God's goodness to console them. They don't want to kill their fellow-creatures for the sake of glory; they go because they are compelled; they have nothing to reproach themselves with; they are defending their own lives, and the blood that is shed will not lie on them.

Well, I must make an end of telling you about this battle, and the transport of the wounded.

I saw sights that one would hardly credit—men killed in the moment of their greatest fury, whose horrible faces had not changed. They still clutched their muskets and stood erect, propped up against walls; and to look at them you might fancy you could hear them cry, "Forward, bayonets! No quarter!"

With this thought and with this cry, they had been summoned in a moment before God, who awaited them. Might He not say to each of them, "Behold! Thou wouldst kill thy brother? Thou wouldst give no quarter? Thou shalt have none!"

I have seen others, men half-dead, strangling each other. And you must know that at Fleurus they were obliged to separate the wounded French from the wounded Prussians, because men used to get up from their beds to tear and destroy one another.

War! war! Those who wish for war and make men resemble savage beasts will have a heavy account to settle hereafter!

## CHAPTER XX

The removal of the wounded continued until the evening. But towards noon cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" were heard extending all along our line of bivouacs, from the village of Bry as far as Sombref. Napoleon had left Fleurus with his superior officers; he was reviewing the army on the plateau. The cries continued for about an hour, and then all was silent; the army must have been on the march.

For a long time we waited an order to follow. As this did not come, Captain Florentin at last went to see what was going on, and came galloping back, crying out, "Beat the rappel."

The detachments of the battalion assembled quickly, and we went up the village at the double. All were in motion. Many other regiments had not received their orders, and in the direction of Saint Amand all the streets were full of soldiers. Some companies who had remained behind came across the fields and gained the road on the left, where one could discern a column extending as far as one could see, with carts, and ammunition-waggons, and baggage of all kinds.

I have often thought that we should have been fortunate that day if we had been left behind, like Gérard's division at Saint Amand, for no one could have reproached us. As we had received orders to attend to the wounded, we should have been well within our duty; but Captain Florentin would have thought himself dishonoured.

So we marched forward rapidly. It began to rain again. We slipped about in the mud, and night was coming on. I had never seen more wretched weather, not even in Germany, during the retreat from Leipsic. The rain fell as if from a sieve, and we toiled on with bent backs, each man with his musket under his arm, and the tail of his greatcoat over our gun-locks, so wet that had we been crossing a river we could hardly have been worse off. And how muddy! To crown all we began to feel the pangs of hunger again. Buche remarked from time to time, "After all, a dozen potatoes baked in the ashes as at Harberg would be a sight to fill one with joy. We don't get meat every day at my place, but we have potatoes."

As for me, I could fancy I saw our little room at Phalsbourg,

warm and cosy, with the white tablecloth; Father Goulden sitting with his plate before him, and Catherine serving the good hot soup, while the cutlets grilled on the hearth. The sadness of my position overwhelmed me; and if wishing for death to deliver me from all my woes had been sufficient to make me die, I should have been out of the world a long time ago.

The night had come. The sky was quite grey. In the paths where the mud was knee deep it was difficult to find the way; but one had only to wade straight on through the mud, and one could not well go wrong.

Between seven and eight o'clock we heard something in the distance like the rolling of thunder. Some of our people said, "It is a storm!" Others said, "It is cannon!" A number of stragglers followed us At eight o'clock we arrived at Quatre Bras. The two houses standing opposite each other where the road from Nivelles to Namur crosses that from Brussels to Charleroi, were crowded with wounded. Here it was that Marshal Ney had given battle to the English to prevent them from effecting a junction with the Prussians by the road along which we had just come. We had only 20,000 men against 40,000, and yet Nicholas Cloutier, the tanner, maintains to this day that we ought to have detached half of this force to attack the Prussians in the rear, as if we had not quite enough to keep the others in check. But to listen to such people, you would think everything is easy; but if they had to command, they would be put to rout by four men and a corporal.

Below, in the fields of barley and oats, lay a great number of corpses; and it was there that I saw the first red-coats lying on the road.

The captain ordered us to halt; he went alone into the house on the right. We had been waiting for some time in the rain, when he came out of the door with the general of Donselot's division, who was laughing, because we should have followed Grouchy's army in the direction of Namur, and that the absence of orders had made us turn towards Quatre Bras. But we were now ordered to continue our march without stopping.

I thought every minute I should have dropped down from exhaustion; but matters became worse when we had overtaken the baggage, for now we had to march by the side of the road, in the fields, and the more we advanced the deeper we sank into the mud.

Towards eleven o'clock we reached a large village called Genappe, which extends along both sides of the road. The

block occasioned by waggons, tumbrils, cannon, and baggage compelled us to pass the Thy on the right by a bridge, and from this point we marched nearly all the time in the fields, through the corn and the hemp, like savages who respect nothing. The night was so dark that the mounted dragoons, placed like sign-posts at every two hundred paces, called out to us, "This way! this way!"

We arrived at midnight at an angle in the road, near a kind of farm, thatched with straw, and filled with officers of rank. It was not far from the high road, for we could hear the cavalry, the artillery, and carriages of all kinds rolling along, like a torrent.

The captain had hardly entered the farm when several of us rushed into the garden, forcing our way through the hedges. I did as the others did, and plucked some roots. Nearly the whole battalion followed us, in spite of the shouts of the officers; every one dug up what he could with his bayonet, and in a few minutes there was not a root left in the ground. The sergeants and corporals had come with us; and when the captain returned we were already back in our ranks.

Those who rob and pillage during a campaign deserve to be shot; but what would you have? In the villages through which we passed there was not a fourth part of the food necessary for our requirements. The English had already taken almost everything. We certainly had a little rice left, but there is not much nourishment in rice without meat. The English received beef and mutton from Brussels; they were well fed, and shone with health. But we had come on too quickly, and our convoys of provisions were behind time; and next day, the terrible day of Waterloo, we received nothing but a ration of brandy.

At last, moving on from there, we mounted a little ridge, and in spite of the rain, we could see the bivouacs of the English. We were made to take up our position in a cornfield, among several regiments which we could not see, because we had received orders to light no fires, for fear we should startle the enemy, if he saw us posted in line, and make him continue his retreat.

Now fancy to yourself men lying among the cornstalks, under a beating rain, like real Bohemians, their teeth chattering with cold, thinking of massacring their fellow-men, and esteeming themselves lucky if they had a turnip, a carrot, or anything else to keep up their strength a little. Is that a life for honest fellows? Is it for this that God created us, and sent us into

the world? Is it not an abomination to think that a king, or an emperor, instead of looking after the affairs of his country, encouraging commerce, diffusing instruction, liberty, and good example, should reduce us to this state by hundreds of thousands? I know that this is what is called glory; but people are very foolish to glorify such men; to do it one must have lost all common sense, and heart, and religion.

You can imagine our chagrin as we saw the English opposite to us, warming themselves and eating unstintedly around their great fires, after receiving their rations of beef, brandy, and tobacco. I thought, "Now we poor devils, drenched to the marrow of our bones, shall be forced to attack these men, who are full of confidence in their strength, and want neither for cannon, nor ammunition, nor anything else; who can sleep with their feet to the fire, after a good meal, while we are lying in the mud."

All night long I felt angry at the sight. Buche said, "I don't mind the rain, for I have had to bear that often enough; but, at any rate, I used to have a crust of bread, some onions, and salt."

He was getting angry. For my part, I felt doubtful about fate, and said nothing.

Between two and three o'clock in the morning the rain ceased. Buche and I sat back to back in a furrow, to warm ourselves, and at last I fell asleep from sheer fatigue.

One thing that I shall never forget is the feeling when I woke at about five o'clock in the morning; the bells of the villages were sounding for matins across the great plain; and, looking at the down-trodden corn, and my comrades lying about right and left, and the grey sky overhead, the great desolation made my heart feel sad. The sound of bells from Planchenoit Genappe, Frichemont, and Waterloo, reminded me of Phalsbourg; and I said to myself, "To-day is Sunday, a day of peace and rest. Father Goulden, yesterday, doubtless hung his best coat over the chair, also a clean shirt. Now he's getting up, and thinking of me. Catherine, also, is dressing in our little room; she is sitting down on the bed and weeps; and Aunt Grethel, at Quatre Vents, is opening her shutters, and has taken her prayerbook out of her wardrobe to go to mass."

And I could fancy I heard the bells of Dann, of Mittelbronn, and of Bigelberg sounding in the silence. I pictured to myself that happy, quiet life, and I could have burst into tears. But the drums began to beat, dull and mournful in the wet weather,

with a sinister sound. Beside the highway, on the left, they were beating the roll-call, and the cavalry trumpets sounded the reveille. Men were getting up and looking across the corn. These three days of marching and fighting, of bad weather and want of rations, had made us all gloomy. Men no longer talked as they did at Ligny; every one looked and reflected on his own account.

One could also see that it would be a very great battle, because instead of having villages well occupied in our first line, which would cause many separate combats, we had here a great elevated plain, bare, and occupied by the English; behind their lines, at the top of the ridge, was the village of Mont Saint Jean; and much farther off, nearly a league and a half way, a great forest that bounded the horizon.

Between the English and ourselves the ground sloped gently downwards, and rose again in our direction; but it was necessary to be accustomed to campaigning to see this little valley, which was deeper towards the right, and narrowed into the form of a ravine. On the slope of this ravine, on our side, behind the hedges, some poplars and other trees, and some thatched houses, indicated a hamlet; it was Planchenoit. In the same direction, but much higher up, and behind the enemy's left, a plain extended as far as we could see, covered with little villages.

In rainy weather, after a storm, these things are seen more plainly; for everything appears a dark blue on a clear ground. One could even distinguish the little village of Saint Lambert, three leagues from us on the right. On our left, and behind the right of the English, were some other little villages, whose names I do not know.

This is what we could see, at the first glance, in the wide country, full of magnificent harvest-fields, with the crops still in flower; and everybody was asking why the English were here, and what advantage they could have in defending this position. Then we observed their line more closely in front of us, and we saw that the great road along which we had marched from Quatre Bras, leading to Brussels, a broad and well-kept road which was even paved in the middle, traversed the enemy's position about the centre; it was straight, and we could follow it with our eyes as far as the village of Mont Saint Jean, and even farther still, to the entrance of the forest of Soignies. The English evidently were going to defend it in order to prevent us from getting to Brussels.

Looking closely, we could see that their line of battle curved a little towards us on both wings, and followed a hollow way which crossed the road to Brussels at right angles. This way was quite hollow on the left of the road; on the right it was bordered by big hedges of holly, and by small beeches, such as are frequently found in this country. Behind it were posted masses of red-coats, who were observing us from their covered way; the front of their ridge descended in a slope like a glacis; it was very dangerous.

And on their wings, which were prolonged to about three-quarters of a league, were innumerable cavalry. We could also see cavalry above, in the plateau, where the main road, after passing the hill, descends before rising again towards Mont Saint Jean; for it was understood that there was a hollow between the position of the English and that village—not very deep, for the plumes of the cavalry could be seen, but yet so deep that great reserve forces could be kept there, sheltered from our fire.

I had seen Weissenfels, Lutzen, Leipsic, and Ligny; and I began to understand what these things meant, why men are posted in one way rather than in another. I arrived at the opinion that these English had posted themselves very skilfully to defend the main road, and that their keeping themselves so well sheltered in the hollow showed that they had great good sense.

For all that, three things seemed to be in our favour. These English, with their covered way and their concealed reserves, were as if inside a great fortification. But everybody knows that in time of war one immediately demolishes everything in the vicinity of a fort, buildings which are too near the ramparts, to prevent the enemy from taking possession of these, and sheltering himself behind them. Well, just before their centre, along the high road, and on the slope of the glacis, was a farm something like La Roulette at Quatre Vents, but five or six times as large. I could see it very well from the height on which we were placed. It formed a great square. The outbuildings, the house, the stables, and the barn formed a triangle in the direction of the English, and the other part was like a triangle formed by a wall and sheds, towards us; there was a court in the interior. One part of this wall led to the fields through a little door, and the other to the road, by a gateway for carriages. The wall was built very strongly of brick. Of course the English had posted troops there, as in a

kind of half-moon; but if we had the luck to carry it, we should be quite close to their centre, and could hurl our attacking columns against them, without remaining long under their fire.

That was our best chance. This farm was called La Haye Sainte, as we afterwards heard.

Farther off, in front of their right wing, in a hollow, was another farm, with a little wood which we might also try to take. This farm could not be seen from where I stood, but it was no doubt much stronger than La Haye Sainte, as it was covered by an orchard surrounded by walls, and by a wood further off. The fire from the windows would command the orchard, the fire from the orchard would command the wood, and the fire from the wood would sweep the ridge, while the enemy might retreat from each in turn.

These things I did not see with my own eyes; but some old soldiers afterwards told me about the attack on this farm, which was called Hougoumont.

One ought to explain everything in describing a battle like this; but the things a man has seen himself are the most important; he can say, "I have seen these things. As for the others, I only heard them from honest people who would be incapable of lying or deception."

Finally, in front of their left wing, where the Wavre Road comes down, a hundred yards from our ridge, were the farms of Papelotte and La Haye, occupied by the Germans, and the little villages of Smohain, Cheval de Bois, and Jean Loo, which I visited afterwards, so that I could account to myself for all that happened. I saw these villages plainly then; but I did not notice them particularly, more especially as they were beyond our line of battle, on the right, and we saw no troops there.

So now everybody can form an idea of the position of the English in front of us, of the great road to Brussels that traversed their position, the cross-road that covered it, the plateau behind, where the reserves were placed, and the three buildings, Hougoumont, La Haye Sainte, and Papelotte, in front, strongly defended. Every one must acknowledge that it would be very difficult to take them.

I regarded it all at six o'clock in the morning, very attentively, as a man might do who risks losing his life or having his bones broken in an enterprise, and who wishes at least to know if he has any chance of getting away.

Zebedee, Sergeant Rabot, Captain Florentin, Buche, every-

body, in fact, on rising, threw a glance in that direction, without saying anything. Then they looked round at the great squares of infantry, the squadrons of cuirassiers, dragoons, and chasseurs, lancers, and others, encamped among the standing crops.

Nobody then feared that the English would retreat; we lighted fires as much as we wished, and the smoke of the wet straw mounted up into the air. Those who still had a little rice left hung up their kettles; and those who had none looked on, and thought, "Every one has his turn. Yesterday we had meat, and laughed at the thought of rice; to-day we should be glad to have some."

Towards eight o'clock some ammunition waggons came up, laden with cartridges, and some carts with barrels of brandy. Every soldier received a double ration; one might have been content with this and a crust of bread; but there was no bread to be had. You may judge from that what condition we were in. That is all we got during the day; for immediately afterwards great movements began. The regiments formed their brigades, and the brigades their divisions, and the divisions were formed into army corps. Officers on horseback galloped about with orders, and everything was in motion. Our battalion joined Donzelot's division; the other divisions had only eight battalions each, but ours had nine.

I have often heard our old soldiers repeat the order of battle arranged by the emperor. Reille's corps was on the left of the road, opposite Hougoumont; Erlon's on the right, opposite La Haye Sainte; Ney, on horseback, on the high road, and Napoleon behind, with the Old Guard, the orderly squadrons, the lancers, chasseurs, etc. That is all I understood; for when they began to talk of the movement of the eleven columns, and of the distances, and began naming the generals one after another, I seem to be hearing of things that I have not seen. I would, therefore, rather tell you simply what I remember myself. Therefore, at half-past eight o'clock, our four divisions were ordered to move forward, on the right of the highway. We were about eighteen to twenty thousand men, and marched in two lines, carrying our muskets as we liked, and sinking up to the knees in the soft ground. Nobody spoke a word.

Many people tell that we were in high spirits, and sang, but that is untrue! When men have been marching all night without receiving any rations, when they have slept with their feet in the water, and have been forbidden to light fires, and are

going to receive an enemy's fire, it takes away their inclination to sing. We were glad to drag our shoes out of the holes into which we sank at every step; the wet crops cooled our legs, and the bravest and most hardened had a weary appearance.

The bands certainly played the regimental marches, and the cavalry trumpets, the drums of the infantry, the big drums and trombones, all mingled together, made a great effect, as they always do. It is true, also, that there could not be a more martial sight than that presented by all these thousands of men marching swiftly along in good order, knapsack on back, and musket on shoulder; the white lines of cuirassiers who followed the red, brown, and green lines of dragoons, hussars, and lancers, whose little swallow-tailed pennons filled the air; the gunners in the space between the brigades, on horseback round their guns, which sank into the earth almost to the axles of the wheels; all these went through the crops, every blade being trodden flat.

And face to face with us were the English, in good order, their artillerymen with lighted matches in their hands, a spectacle that made you think of many things. Nor did it gladden our sight, as many have asserted; for people who are fond of cannon-balls are very rarely found.

Father Goulden had told me that, in his time, the soldiers used to sing; but that was because they had turned out voluntarily, and had not been forced to go. They fought to defend their fields, and to maintain the rights of man, which they loved more than the eyes in their heads, and it was a very different thing from being killed to decide whether we were to have the old nobles or new ones. As for me, I never heard any singing either at Leipsic or at Waterloo.

We marched on, and the music played by order; and when it ceased there was a great silence. Then we were at the head of a little valley, at a thousand or twelve hundred paces from the left of the English. We formed the centre of our army; chasseurs and lancers were posted on the right flank.

The distances were taken, the ranks were closed up, and the first brigade of the first division made an oblique movement on the left, and took up a position across the high road. Our battalion formed part of the second division; thus we were in the front line with a single brigade of the first before us. All the cannon were ordered to the front; the guns of the English could be seen opposite at the same level. And for a long time other divisions kept coming up to support us. It seemed as if

the whole world were marching. The old soldiers said, "Here are Milhaud's cuirassiers! Here are the chasseurs of Lefebvre-Desnoettës! Yonder is Lobau's corps!"

On all sides, as far as the eye could reach, nothing was to be seen but cuirasses, helmets, busbies, swords, lances, and rows of bayonets.

"What a battle!" cried Buche. "Woe to the English!"

And I thought as he did—I believed that not a single Englishman would escape. We may truly be said to have had bad luck on that day. Without the Prussians, I think we should have exterminated them all.

During the two hours we stood with our guns by our sides we had not even time to see half our regiments and squadrons, for new ones kept coming up. I remember that an hour after, there rose on the left a sudden tempest of shouts, "Vive l'Empereur!" and that these cries approached, and grew louder and louder; that we all stood on tiptoe, and stretched our necks; that the excitement spread through the ranks; that behind us the very horses neighed as if they wanted to shout too, and that suddenly a cloud of general officers swept by us at a gallop. Napoleon was among them. I think I saw him, but I am not sure of it; he rode so fast, and so many men lifted their shakos on the points of their bayonets, that one had hardly time to recognise his round back and grey overcoat amid the embroidered uniforms. The captain had just time to cry, "Shoulder arms! Present arms!" and it was over.

That's the way one almost always saw him, unless one belonged to the Guard.

When he had passed and the cries had been taken up on the right, growing more and more distant, the idea seized everybody that in twenty minutes the battle would begin. But we were kept waiting much longer than that. We began to be impatient; the conscripts of Erlon, who had not had such work as ours the day before, began crying out, "Forward!" when at last towards noon, the cannon began booming on the left, and a moment afterwards the battalions opened fire, and then file-firing began. We could see nothing of it; it was on the other side of the way, the attack on Hougomont.

Immediately fresh cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" were raised. The cannoneers of our four divisions were standing in line putting in the charge, ramming all together, then standing up and scraping the match on their arm; they seemed to move all together, and it turned you cold to look at them. The cap-

tains of the guns stood behind; nearly all of them were old officers, and gave the command as if they were on parade; and when the eighty guns discharged all together, nothing else could be heard, and the whole valley was covered with smoke.

After a second or two the calm clear voices of the old officers could be heard, through the humming in one's ears, giving the word of command again, "Load—ram—aim—fire!"

And this went on without interruption for half an hour. We could no longer see each other; but on the other side the English had also opened fire; the rushing of their cannon-balls in the air, the dull thud with which they struck the ground, and that other noise in the ranks, when muskets were shattered to pieces, and men were hurled twenty paces to the rear, like sacks, with every bone smashed, or when they fell with a leg or an arm gone, that noise mingled with the deep rumbling; the massacre was beginning.

Some cries of the wounded mingled in this great uproar. We could also hear horses neighing with a piercing sound; it is a terrible cry, for these animals are naturally ferocious; they seem to feel a certain joy in carnage, and are hardly to be restrained. Behind us, more than half a league off, this tumult could be heard; the horses wanted to start.

For a long time we had not been able to see anything but the shadows of our gunners moving about in the smoke at the end of the ravine, when the order came to cease firing. And then we heard the piercing voice of the colonels of our divisions crying, "Form the ranks in order of battle!"

All the lines drew closer together.

"Now our turn is coming," I said to Buche.

"Yes," he answered, "let us keep together."

The smoke of our guns was rising, and we saw the English, who were continuing their fire all along the hedges that bordered their road. The first brigade of Alix's division advanced along the road to La Haye Sainte. They advanced quickly. I recognised behind them Marshal Ney and a few staff officers.

All the windows of the farmhouse, the garden, and the walls where holes had been pierced, all was on fire; at every step some men were left behind lying on the road. Ney on horseback, in his great cocked hat, was watching the action in the middle of the causeway. I said to Buche, "There is Marshal Ney; the second brigade is going to support the first, and we shall come afterwards."

But I was mistaken; for at that moment the first battalion

of the second brigade received orders to march in line, on the right-hand side of the road, the second battalion behind them, the third behind the second, at last the fourth as in defiling order. There was no time to form us in columns of attack, but we made a strong mass all the same; we were placed some behind each other, and a hundred and fifty and two hundred men in front; the captains between the companies, the commandants between the battalions. Only the balls, instead of carrying off two men at a time, carried off eight; those behind could not fire, because the front ranks were in the way, and one saw, too, that we could not form square. It would have been as well to have thought of this beforehand; but the eager desire to break the English ranks and win the battle at once was too strong for us.

Our division was made to march in the same manner; as often as the first battalion advanced, the second advanced, and so on. As the left were to begin, I saw with pleasure that we should be in the twenty-fifth rank, and that there must be a terrible slaughter before the enemy could reach us. The two divisions on our right formed equally in massive columns, being three hundred paces from each other.

It was thus that we descended into the valley, notwithstanding the fire of the English. The heavy ground in which our footsteps sank retarded our march, we shouted all together, "Charge, bayonets!"

On ascending we received a shower of balls over the pathway to the left. If it had not been for the tufts of bushes on our way I think that frightful fusilade would have stopped us. The drums beat the charge, the officers shouted, "Left, incline!"

But this terrible fire made us involuntarily step out further with the right leg than with the left; so that when we came near the road that was bordered with hedges, we had lost our distances, and our division formed, so to speak, a great square with the third.

Then two batteries began to sweep us down. The grape-shot that came from among the hedges, a hundred paces off, pierced us through and through. There was a general cry of horror, and we rushed forward at the batteries, overturning the redcoats who tried to stop us.

Then, for the first time, I had a new view of the English, who are persons with fair skins, and clean shaven, like respectable citizens. They can fight well, but we are as good as they! It is not the fault of us poor soldiers that they beat us, for every

one knows that we showed as much courage as they, and more.

It has been asserted that we were not the soldiers of Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, and the Moskwa. That is true enough; but if those were so good, they ought to have been better taken care of; we should have been glad enough to see them in our places.

All the shots of the English told; and this forced us to break our ranks. Men are not palisades; and when they are shot at they must defend themselves.

A great number had thus detached themselves, when thousands of English rose up from the midst of the corn-crops and fired point blank at them, which produced a great carnage. Every moment new files came to the assistance of their comrades, and we should at last have spread out like an anthill on the ridge, if the cry had not been raised, "Attention! Receive cavalry!"

And almost immediately we saw a mass of red dragoons on grey horses sweeping along like the wind; all our men who had straggled were sabred without mercy.

It must not be supposed that these dragoons fell upon our columns to break them, for they were too great and massive for that; they came down between our divisions, sabring right and left, and pushing their horses against the flanks of columns to cut them in two, but in this they could not succeed; nevertheless, they killed a large number, and threw us into great disorder.

This was one of the most terrible moments of my life. As an old soldier I was on the right of the battalion; I had seen from afar what these people intended to do; they passed by, stretching as far forward as they could over their horses' necks to smite down our ranks; their strokes came down like lightning, and more than twenty times I thought my head was off my shoulders. Fortunately for me Sergeant Rabot was next me, and he received the horrible deluge of blows, defending himself to the death, and crying at each stroke, "Cowards! Cowards!"

His blood fell upon me like rain. At last he sank down. I had still my musket loaded, and seeing one of the dragoons marking me from afar, and leaning forward to make a thrust at me, I shot him down point blank. That is the only man I saw fall before my musket.

The worst was that at the same moment their infantry, who had been rallied, began to fire upon us, and were even bold

enough to attack us with the bayonet. The first two lines were the only ones who could defend themselves. It was an abominable thing to have arranged us in this fashion.

Then the red dragoons came down into the valley pell-mell with us.

Our division had defended itself best, for we had saved our colours, while two others beside us had lost two eagles.

Thus we came down through the mud, among the guns that had been sent to support us, and whose teams had been sabred by the dragoons. We were running in every direction, Buche and I still keeping together, and it was not till ten minutes afterwards that they managed to rally us in groups from all the regiments.

Those who wish to take upon themselves to command in war ought always to keep such examples as this before their eyes, and to consider well before trying new devices. These devices cost those dear who have to be experimented on.

We looked behind us as we paused to take breath, and saw the red dragoons already riding up the ridge to carry our great battery of eight guns; but, thank Heaven! their turn had come to be massacred. The emperor had seen our retreat from afar, and as these dragoons rose up, two regiments of cuirassiers on the right, with a regiment of lancers on the left, fell on them in flank like thunder. Before one had time to look they were upon them. We could hear the blows ringing on the cuirasses, and the horses neighing; we could see the lances rising and falling a hundred paces off, and great sabres stretched out, the men leaning forward to thrust from beneath, and the wild horses rearing up and biting and neighing in a terrible manner, the men lying on the ground beneath the horses feet, trying to rise, and guarding their heads with their hands.

What a terrible thing is a battle! Buche cried, "Courage!" And as for me, I felt the sweat running from my forehead. Others, who had been struck, and whose eyes were full of blood, wiped their faces with a ferocious laugh.

Within ten minutes seven hundred dragoons were disabled; their grey horses were running in every direction, with their bits between their teeth. Some hundreds of the dragoons rode back to their batteries, but more than one swayed to and fro in the saddle, clinging to the mane of his horse. They had seen that it is not everything to fall upon people, and that those who attack may receive a check they little expect.

Of all this horrible spectacle the incident that remained most

plainly in my mind is that our cuirassiers, as they came riding back, with their long sabres red to the hilt, were laughing among themselves, and that a big captain, with a great brown moustache, winked his eye in a funny way as he rode past us, as though he would say, "Well, you saw it—we sent them back quickly."

Yes, but three thousand of our men lay stretched in the valley; and it was not finished, for the companies, battalions and brigades were rallying; in the direction of La Haye Sainte the fusilade was kept up; and farther off, near Hougoumont, the cannon was roaring; all this was only by way of beginning, and the officers were saying, "We have it to do over again."

You would have thought that the men's lives were of no value.

Well, it was necessary to take La Haye Sainte — at any price to force the passage of the great main road in the enemy's centre, as the gate of a fortress is forced, in spite of their fire from the advanced posts and the demi-lunes. We had been repulsed the first time, but the battle had begun, and there was no drawing back.

After the charge of the cuirassiers, we required time to reform, At Hougoumont the battle continued; the cannonade was beginning again on our right; two batteries had been brought up to clear the road behind La Haye Sainte, where the road runs into the ridge. Every one saw that the attack would be in that direction.

We were marching with shouldered arms, when, towards three o'clock, Buche, looking back on the road, said, "Here is the emperor coming!"

And other men in the ranks repeated, "Here comes the emperor!"

The smoke was so thick that one could hardly see, on the little height of Rossomme, the lofty bearskins of the Old Guard. I had also turned round to look at the emperor; but soon we recognised Marshal Ney, with five or six staff officers; they came from headquarters, and were advancing towards us at a gallop, across country. We were standing with our backs towards him. Our commanders went out to meet him, and we could hear them talking together, but could distinguish nothing of what they said, because of the noise that filled our ears.

The marshal immediately rode to the front of our two battalions and drew his sword. I had not seen him so close since the great review at Aschaffenberg; he looked older, thinner, and more bony, but he was the same man still; as he

looked at us with his clear grey eyes, he seemed to take us all in, and each separate man thought he was looking at him. Presently he pointed with his sword to La Haye Sainte, and cried out to us, "We are going to take that! You must act all together. It's the chief point of the battle. I shall lead you myself. Battalions, left file!"

We set off quickly. On the high road we were made to march in companies of three lines; I was in the second; Marshal Ney rode in front, with the two commandants and Captain Florentin; he had put back his sword into his sheath. The bullets whistled round us by hundreds, and the cannon roared in such a way in the valley of Hougoumont on the left, and on the right in our rear, that it was like the booming of a huge bell, when at last you don't hear the separate strokes, but only a great humming. Every now and then one of our men fell, and the rest fell over his body.

Two or three times the marshal looked back to see if we marched in good order; he looked so cool and collected, that it seemed natural to me not to be afraid; his countenance gave confidence to all, and every one thought, "Ney is with us—the others are dead men!"

That is one of the fallacies of human nature; for a great many of our people fell on the way. Well, the nearer we came to the great building, the more distinctly was the sound of the musketry heard, amid the roaring of the cannon; and now we could distinctly see the flashes from the muskets fired out of the windows, the great roof dimly appearing through the smoke, and the road strewn with big stones.

We marched along by a hedge. Behind the hedge the fire of our sharpshooters was heard; for the first brigade of Alix's division had not left the orchard. When they saw us defiling along the high road they raised a cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" and as the whole fire of the Germans was then concentrated upon us, Marshal Ney drew his sword, and shouted, in a voice that was heard a long distance off, "Forward!"

Then we started off, through the smoke, with two or three other officers. We all set off running, our cartridge boxes flapping to and fro at our hips, and our guns held ready. In the rear, at some distance, they were beating the charge; we lost sight of the marshal, and did not see him again till we got near a barn that separated the garden from the road, when we saw him on horseback under the great gate. It seemed that others had already tried to break down this gate, for heaps of

dead bodies, mingled with beams and paving-stones, were piled around it, extending to the middle of the road. Fire poured forth from every hole in the building, and the thick smell of powder pervaded everything.

"Break that down for me!" cried the marshal, whose face had completely changed.

And we all rushed forward, fifteen and twenty at a time, and threw away our guns, and seized beams, which we thrust against the door, that creaked and then sounded like thunder. At each blow one would have thought it must give way. Through the cracks one could see paving-stones on the other side, piled up to the very top. The gate was riddled with balls. If it had fallen, it would have crushed us; but fury made us blind. We no longer looked like men; some had no shakos on, others were in tatters, almost in their shirts, and blood was running on their hands, and down their legs; and amid the rolling of the musketry, volleys of grapeshot came down from the ridges, and the paving-stones around us flew about in fragments.

I looked round, but could see neither Zebedee nor Buche, nor any one belonging to my company. The marshal had also gone away. Our fury redoubled; and as the beams swung to and fro, and men became mad with rage, when they saw that the door would not give way, all at once cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" arose in the courtyard with a terrible din. Every one then understood that our troops were in the farm, and made good speed to drop the beams and snatch up their muskets, and leap into the garden through the breaches to see where the others had got in. It was behind the farm, by a door which led into a barn. We went in, in a row, like a lot of wolves. The interior of this old building, which was full of straw, looked like one of those nests full of blood where the sparrow-hawk has passed.

On a large heap of manure, in the middle of the courtyard, they were bayoneting the Germans, who uttered savage cries and imprecations.

I rushed through the massacre, haphazard. I heard some one crying, "Joseph! Joseph!" and looked, thinking, "It is Buche calling me!" Then I immediately saw him on the right, before the door of a wood-loft, holding his bayonet out to keep back five or six of our men. At the same time I saw Zebedee; for our company was in this corner, and running to Buche's assistance, I cried out, "Zebedee!" Then rushing through the crowd, I shouted, "What is it, Buche?"

"They want to massacre my prisoners!"

I placed myself by his side. The others, in their fury, were loading their guns to kill us; they were light infantry soldiers belonging to another battalion. Zebedee came up with several men of our company, and without asking what was the matter, he seized one of the most formidable men by the throat, crying out, "My name is Zebedee, sergeant in the 6th Light Infantry; after this affair, we will have an explanation together."

Then the others went away; and Zebedee said to me, "What is the matter, Joseph?"

I told him that we had some prisoners; and he immediately became pale with anger against us. But, going into the wood-room, he saw an old major, who held out the hilt of his sword to him in silence, and a soldier, who said in German, "Spare my life, Frenchman! don't take my life!"

At such a moment, when the cries of those who were being killed still resounded through the courtyard, that moved one's heart; and Zebedee said to them, "Good, I receive you as my prisoners!"

He went out again, and shut the door. We did not leave the place till the recall began to sound. Then when the men had fallen in again, Zebedee informed Captain Florentin that we had a major and a soldier as prisoners. They were brought out, and ordered to march across the courtyard without arms, and then were put into a room with three or four others. They were all who remained of the two Nassau battalions to whom the defence of La Haye Sainte had been entrusted.

While this was going on, two other Nassau battalions, who were coming up to the assistance of their comrades, had been cut up by our cuirassiers outside, so that at this moment the victory was ours; we were masters of the chief advanced post of the English, we could begin the grand attack on the centre, cut the enemy off from the road to Brussels, and force him into the bad roads in the forest of Soignies. We had had a hard time, but the principal part of the battle was done. At two hundred paces from the English line, well under cover, we could fall upon them, and without boasting, I think that with the bayonet, and well supported by our cavalry, we could have pierced their line; and if we worked well, we should not want more than an hour to finish the job. But while we were still quite elated, and while officers, drummers, trumpeters, and men, all pell-mell among the ruins, thought only of stretching their limbs, and taking breath, and rejoicing, suddenly the news spread that the

Prussians were coming up and would attack us in flank, and that we should have two battles to wage, one in the front and another on the right; and that we ran a risk of being surrounded by forces twice as numerous as our own.

This was terrible news; and yet several stupid persons said, "So much the better! Let the Prussians come! We shall crush them all together."

But those men who had not lost their heads, immediately remembered how wrong we had been not to profit by our victory at Ligny, and to let the Prussians go off quietly during the night without sending cavalry to pursue them, as is always done. It may be boldly affirmed that the same fault was the cause of our disaster at Waterloo. The emperor had certainly, next day at noon, sent Marshal Grouchy with 32,000 men to follow the Prussians, but it was much too late; they had had time to rally during those fifteen hours, to resume the offensive, and to communicate with the English. It must be remembered that on the day after Ligny the Prussians had still 90,000 men, 30,000 of whom were fresh troops, and 275 guns. With such an army they could do whatever they pleased; they could even fight a second battle against the emperor; but what they liked better was to attack us in flank while we had the English opposite us. It is so clear and simple, that I cannot understand how people see anything wonderful in it. Blucher had already played us the same game at Leipsic, and now he was repeating it by letting Grouchy pursue him, a long way behind. Could Grouchy compel him to come back towards him, while Blucher wanted to go forward? Could he prevent him from leaving thirty or forty thousand men, to detain the troops who were pursuing him, and going with the rest to Wellington's assistance? Our only hope was that an order had been sent to Grouchy to come back to us, and that he would come in the rear of the Prussians; but the emperor had sent no such order.

You must know that these ideas did not occur to us simple soldiers, but to our officers and generals; as for us, we knew nothing; we were there like victims who do not suspect that their hour is near.

Well, I have said everything that I think; and now I am going to tell you the rest of the battle as I saw it myself, that every one may know as much about it as I do.

## CHAPTER XXI

Almost immediately after the news of the arrival of the Prussians, the recall began to beat; the battalions disentangled themselves, and ours, with another belonging to the Quinot brigade, remained to guard La Haye Sainte, and all the others marched off to join the corps of General Erlon, which was again advancing into the valley, and trying to outflank the English on the left.

Our two battalions made haste to close up the doors and breaches, the best way they could, with beams and paving-stones. Men were posted in ambuscade at all the holes the enemy had made in the direction of the orchard and of the road.

It was over a stable, at the corner of the farm, at a thousand or twelve hundred yards from Hougoumont, that Zebedee, Buche, and I were posted with the rest of the company. I can still see before me the row of holes, at a man's height from the ground, that the Germans had pierced in the wall to defend the orchard. As we mounted, we looked through these holes at our line of battle, at the great road from Brussels to Charleroi, the little farms of Belle Alliance, Rossomme, and Gros Caillou, which bordered it, the Old Guard standing with shouldered arms across the high road, and the staff on a little eminence on the left; and farther on, in the same direction, behind the ravine of Planchenoit, the white smoke extending over the trees, and continually bursting forth afresh; it was the attack of the 1st Prussian Corps.

We heard later on that the emperor had sent ten thousand men, under the command of Lobau, to stop them. The fight had begun; but the Old Guard and the Young Guard, Milhaud's cuirassiers, those of Kellermann and the chasseurs of Lefebvre Desnoëttes—in fact all our magnificent cavalry—remained in position; the great and real battle was still against the English.

How many thoughts passed through one's mind at this grand spectacle, and the immense plain, which the emperor must have seen with his mind, more plainly than we could see it with our eyes! We should have stayed there for hours if Captain Florentin had not suddenly come up.

"Well, what are you doing there?" he called out. "Are

you going to defend the road against the Guard? Come, make haste; pierce this wall on the side towards the enemy."

Every one picked up the hammers and pickaxes the Germans had left on the floor, and we made holes in the wall of the loft. That did not take a quarter of an hour; and then we could see the combat of Hougoumont, the buildings on fire, the bomb-shells which burst every moment among the ruins, the Scottish infantry soldiers in ambush on the road behind; and on our right, quite near us, only two gunshots off, the English drawing their first line towards the centre, and posting their cannon up higher, for our sharp-shooters were beginning to dismount. But the remainder of their line did not stir; they had red squares and black squares like a chessboard, some in front and some behind the hollow way; these squares were near each other at the same angles; to attack them, one had to pass through a cross fire; their guns remained in position on the margin of the plain; farther off, on the brow of the ridge of Mont Saint Jean, their cavalry was waiting.

The position of these English seemed to me still stronger than in the morning; and as we had not so far succeeded against their left wing, as the Prussians were attacking us in flank, the idea came into my mind for the first time that we were not sure of winning the battle. I pictured to myself our terrible rout, if unhappily we were to lose—between two armies, one in front, and the other on our flank—the second invasion that would follow, the forced contributions, the sieges of towns, the return of the emigrants, and their vengeance. I felt that this thought was making me turn quite pale.

The same moment, cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" rose from thousands of voices behind us. Buche was near me in a corner of the left; he was crying, "Vive l'Empereur!" with our comrades; and leaning over his shoulder, I saw all our cavalry of the right wing—namely, Milhaud's cuirassiers, the lancers and chasseurs of the Guard, more than five thousand men, advancing at the trot; they were riding across the high road, and down into the valley between Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte. I knew that they were going to attack the English squares, and that our fate was at stake.

The captains of the English guns gave their commands in such a loud voice that one could hear them through all the tumult and the innumerable cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" It was a terrible moment when our cuirassiers passed down into the valley; it seemed to me like a torrent at the meeting of the

snows, when the sun shines upon millions of icicles. The horses, with great blue portmanteaus behind their saddles, were all stretching out together like stags, clattering over the earth; the trumpets sounded fiercely amid the thundering din, and as they went by, the first discharge of grapeshot made our old barn shake. The wind blew from Hougoumont and filled all the openings with smoke; we bent forward to look out; then the second and third discharge followed close upon each other.

Through the smoke I could see the English artillerymen abandoning their guns, and retreating with their teams; and immediately our cuirassiers were upon the squares, whose fire burst out in a zigzag line along the ridge. There could be heard a confused noise, groans, clashing of arms, neighing of horses, and a great discharge at intervals; then came fresh cries, fresh tumult, renewed groans. And in the smoke that thickened about the farm, horses passed by scores like shadows, with manes erect, some of them dragging along a horseman with his foot caught in the stirrup. This went on for more than an hour!

After Milhaud's cuirassiers came the chasseurs of Lefebvre Desnoëttes; after the lancers, Kellermann's cuirassiers; after these the mounted grenadiers of the Guard; after the grenadiers, the dragoons. All these men rode up the ridge at a trot, waving their sabres in the air, and uttering cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" that pierced the sky.

At every fresh charge one would have thought that they must overturn everything; but when the trumpets sounded the rally, when they came back at a gallop, pursued by grapeshot, to re-form at the end of the plateau, there stood the long red lines, immovable as walls, in the smoke.

These English are good soldiers. We must also remember that they knew Blucher was coming to their assistance with sixty thousand men, and naturally that knowledge gave them great courage.

In spite of that, towards six o'clock we had destroyed half their squares; but then the horses of our cuirassiers, exhausted by twenty charges in the soft earth sodden by the rain, could no longer advance among the heaps of dead.

And night was coming on. The great battle-field behind us seemed to be empty. At last the great plain on which we had encamped the previous night was deserted, and below the Old Guard alone remained across the road, with shouldered arms; all were gone, on the right against the Prussians, in front against the English. We looked at one another in dismay.

It was already getting dark when Captain Florentin appeared at the top of the ladder, with his two hands grasping the floor of the loft, and cried out to us in a solemn voice, "Fusiliers, the hour has come to conquer or to die!"

I remembered that these words were in the emperor's proclamation, and we all came down in a line. It was not quite dark yet, but the devastated courtyard was quite grey, and the dead were already stiff on the manure-heap and along the walls.

The captain ranged us along the right side of the courtyard, and the commandant of the other battalion posted his men along the left side. Our drums sounded for the last time in the old building, and we marched through the little back gate into the garden; we had to stoop our heads to get through.

Outside, the walls of the garden had been swept down. Wounded men were crouching among the ruins, one binding up his head, another his arm or his leg; a sutler woman, with her donkey and cart, and wearing a broad straw hat that hung down over her shoulders, was also crouching in a corner; I don't know what had brought the unfortunate person to this place. Several horses, exhausted with fatigue, their heads hanging and covered with dirt and blood, looked worn-out hacks indeed.

What a difference from the morning! Then the companies came up with the loss of half their men, but still they were companies. Now confusion was beginning to spread; three days had sufficed to reduce us to the condition in which we were at Leipsic after a year's fighting. The remains of our battalion and one other were all which formed in orderly line; and, to be candid, fear was spreading among us.

When men have not eaten since the evening before, when they have been fighting all day long, and when at night, after their strength is gone, the weakness of hunger seizes them, fear comes with it, and the most courageous lose hope; all our great and disastrous retreats come from that.

And yet, in spite of all, we were not vanquished, for the cuirassiers still kept their ground on the plateau; on all sides amid the roaring of the guns and the tumult, one cry only was heard, "The Guard is coming!"

Ah, yes, the Guard was coming! It was coming at last. We could see from afar the tall bearskins advancing in good order along the high road.

Those who have not seen the Guard advance on a field of battle will never understand what confidence men can have in

a selected corps, and the kind of respect that strength and courage inspire. The men of the Old Guard were nearly all peasants of the old pre-republican times, men of at least five feet six, wiry and well-built. They had driven the plough in their time for the convent and the chateau; after that they had joined the general levy of the people; they had gone to Germany, Holland, Italy, Egypt, Poland, Spain, and Russia; first under Kleber, Hoche, and Marceau, and afterwards under Napoleon, who treated them well, and gave them good pay. They considered themselves to a certain extent as the proprietors of a great farm that they must defend, and even extend more and more. That gave them a certain standing, and it seemed as if they were defending their own property. They no longer knew their relations, their cousins, or the people of their districts; they only knew the emperor, who was their God; and finally, they had adopted the King of Rome to inherit all with them, to keep them, and honour their old age. Never has anything been seen like it; they were so accustomed to march, to stand in line, to charge, shoot, and attack with the bayonet, that they seemed to do it all naturally, just as they wished. When they advanced with shouldered arms, with their great bearskin hats, their white waistcoats, and their gaiters, they seemed all to look like one another; and one could easily see that it was the emperor's right arm advancing. When it was said in the ranks, "The Guard is going to charge," it was equal to saying, "The battle is won!" But at this moment, after the great massacre and the terrible attacks that had been repulsed, seeing the Prussians falling on our flank, men said to one another, "It is the grand coup!" But each one thought, "If it fails, all is lost!"

That is why we all looked so anxiously at the Guard, as it advanced along the road. It was Ney again who led it, as he had led the attack of the cuirassiers. The emperor knew that no one could lead the Guard better than Ney, only he ought to have sent it out an hour earlier, when our cuirassiers were among the squares; then all would have been won. But the emperor looked on his Guard as the apple of his eye; if he had had his Guard, five days afterwards, at Paris, Lafayette and the rest would not have remained long in their chamber to turn him out; but then he had it no longer.

That is why he had waited so long before sending it out. He hoped that the cavalry with Ney would overturn everything, or that Grouchy's thirty-two thousand men would come up at

the sound of the guns, and that he could send these out instead of his Guard; because one can always replace thirty or forty thousand men by a conscription, whereas to produce a Guard like that one must begin at twenty-five years, and gain fifty victories, besides the best, the steadiest, and strongest of all the army, is the Guard.

Well, the Guard was coming on—we saw it. Ney, old Friant, and three or four others were marching in front. We saw nothing else but that; all the rest, the roar of the guns, the fusilade, the cries of the wounded, everything was alike forgotten. But that did not last long, for the English had also understood that it was the crowning attack; they made haste to concentrate all their forces to receive it.

One would have thought that, on our left, the battle-field was empty; there was no more firing, either because the ammunition was exhausted, or because the enemy was forming in a new order. On the right, on the contrary, in the direction of Frichemont, the cannonade was redoubled in violence; the whole affair seemed to have drifted in that direction, and we dared not say to each other, "The Prussians are attacking us—there is another army coming to crush us!" No, this idea appeared too horrible; when all at once a staff officer passed by like lightning, crying, "Grouchy! Marshal Grouchy is coming!"

It was at the moment when the four battalions swerved to the right of the high road, to mount behind the orchard and begin the attack.

How many times during the last fifty years have I not pictured to myself this attack during the night, and how many times have I not heard it described by others! To hear these stories one would suppose the Guard was alone, that it advanced like a wall, and alone endured the enemy's fire. But all this occurred in the midst of the greatest confusion; this terrible attack was delivered by our whole army; all the remains of the left wing and of the centre took part in it; all that remained of the cavalry which had been exhausted by six hours of fighting; all who could still stand upright, and lift their arms. The infantry of Reille were concentrated on the left, we were around La Haye Sainte, and that was all that remained, and would not be massacred.

Let no one say that we were panic-stricken, and wanted to run like cowards, for it is not true. When the rumour circulated that Grouchy was coming, the very wounded rose and took their places in the ranks. One would have thought that a breeze

was blowing that made the dead march; all the poor creatures lying behind La Haye Sainte, with bandaged heads or arms and legs, their clothes in rags and covered with blood, all who could put one foot before the other, joined the Guard, who passed out beyond the breaches in the garden, and every man bit his last cartridge.

The drums beat the charge, and our cannon had begun to thunder again. On the ridge all was silent. Lines of English guns stood abandoned, and one would have thought our enemies were gone. It was not until the bearskins began to show over the plateau that five or six volleys of grapeshot announced to us that they were waiting for us.

Then it was clear that these English, Germans, Belgians, and Hanoverians, all these people whom apparently we had been killing and massacring since the morning, had re-formed at the back, and that we must charge through them. Many wounded men retired then, and the Guard, on whom fell the thick of the hail of bullets, advanced almost alone—alone through the grapeshot and musket-balls, overturning everything, but it drew closer and closer together, and diminished visibly. After twenty minutes all the mounted officers were on foot; it stopped before a musketry fire of such a horrible kind that we ourselves, two hundred paces in the rear, could not hear the report of our own guns, and our muskets seemed to be only flashing in the pan.

Finally all this mass of enemies, on the right and on the left, rose up, with cavalry on their flanks, and fell upon us. The four battalions of the Guard, reduced from three thousand men to twelve hundred, could not support such a charge, and gave ground slowly, and we gave ground too, defending ourselves with our muskets and bayonets.

We had seen more terrible fights, but this was the last.

When we reached the edge of the plateau to go down, all the plain beneath us, already covered with shadows, was in confusion and rout; all were scattering and retreating, some on horseback, some on foot; only one battalion of the Guard, drawn up in a square near the farm, and three other battalions farther off, with another square of the Guard, at the cross-road of Planchenoit, remained firm as fortresses amidst an inundation that swept off all the rest. All were going — hussars, chasseurs, cuirassiers, artillery, infantry, pell-mell on the road, across the fields, like an army of barbarians in flight. Along the ravine of Planchenoit the dark sky was lit up by the firing; the Guard's square still held its own against Bülow, and prevented

him from cutting us off from the road; but nearer to us some Prussian cavalry, were rushing down into the valley like a stream pouring over its dam. Old Blucher had also come up with forty thousand men; he was driving back our right wing, and scattering it before him.

What can I tell you more? It was utter rout; we were surrounded on all sides; the English were driving us down into the valley, and in the valley Blucher was coming up. Our generals and officers, the emperor himself, had no other resource but to throw themselves into the centre of the square; and yet they say that we poor unhappy men were seized with panic. Never was anything more unjust.

I was running towards the farm with Buche and five or six comrades; shells were rolling and bursting around us, and we came up like lost creatures near the road where English cavalry were already galloping along, calling out to each other, "No quarter! No quarter!"

At that moment the square of the Guard began to retreat. The men fired in all directions to keep off the poor wretches who wanted to get in; only the generals and officers were able to escape.

What I shall never forget if I lived a thousand years is the tremendous confused cry that resounded through the valley for more than a league, while in the distance the grenadiers' call was being beaten, like the tocsin sounding in the midst of a conflagration; but it was even more terrible than that; it was the last appeal of France, of a proud and courageous people; it was the voice of the country calling, "Help me, my children—I die!" No, I cannot paint that for you! That rolling of the drums of the Old Guard in the midst of our disaster was at once moving and terrible! I sobbed like a child; Buche was dragging me away, and I cried out to him, "Jean, leave me! We are lost! we have lost all!"

The thought of Catherine, of Father Goulden, of Phalsbourg, did not come into my head. What I wonder at, even now, is that we were not massacred a hundred times on that road, along which files of English and Prussians were passing. Perhaps they took us for Germans; perhaps they were running after the emperor, for every one hoped to catch him.

Opposite the little farm of Rossomme we had to turn into the fields on the right; it was there that the last square of the Guard still sustained the attack of the Prussians; but it did not hold together long, for twenty minutes afterwards the

enemy appeared on the road, and the Prussian chasseurs ran out in groups to stop those who straggled or remained behind. One would have thought that the road was a bridge, and that all who left it fell into a gulf.

At the descent of the ravine, behind the inn of Passe Avant, some Prussian hussars galloped towards us. There were not more than five or six of them, and they cried out to us to surrender; but if we had turned up the butt-ends of our muskets in token of yielding, they would have killed us. We pointed our muskets at them; and seeing that we were not wounded, they rode off. This forced us to go back into the road, along which the shouts and tumult extended for at least two leagues. Cavalry, infantry, artillery, ambulances, baggage, all mingled together; the men roaring, fighting, weeping, and the horses neighing. No, not even at Leipsic had I seen such a spectacle as that. The moon was rising over the wood, behind Planchenoit, and shone down upon the crowd of busbies, bearskins, helmets, sabres, bayonets, overturned tumbrils, and encumbered cannons; the crush became greater every moment; plaintive cries arose from one end of the line to the other, mounting and descending the ridges, and dying away in the distance like a wail. But saddest of all were the screams of women, those poor wretches who follow armies, when they were trampled down, or pushed down the bank with their carts; they uttered cries that one could hear above the great tumult, and nobody turned his head, not a man stepped aside to stretch forth his hand to them. Every one for himself! I am crushing you? So much the worse for you. I am the stronger. You cry out? That's all the same to me! Stand off—stand off! I am on horseback. I shall hit you. Make room! I only want to get away myself. The others are doing the same thing. Room for the emperor —room for the marshal! The stronger tramples down the weaker. Strength is the only thing in this world. Forward! forward! Let the guns crash everything, so long as they are brought off. The guns can't get any farther. Then unhinge and cut the traces, and beat the horses that are carrying us off. Let them keep on as long as they can and then let them die. What is all the rest to us? If we are not the stronger, why our turn will come to be crushed, and then we shall cry out, and no one will care for our cries. "Sauve qui peut!" and "Vive l'Empereur!" But the emperor is dead.

Every one felt that the emperor had died with the Old Guard —that seemed a matter of course.

Prussian cavalry soldiers rode past us in files, waving their sabres in the air and crying, "Hurrah!" They looked as if they were escorting us, and they cut down every man who left the high road. They took no prisoners, neither did they attack the column itself; some dropping shots were fired, to right and left. Behind, some way off, we could see a red flame rising up in the darkness; the farm of Caillou was on fire.

We hastened onward; hunger, fatigue, despair weighed us down, and we should have liked to die; and yet the hope of escape kept us up. As we walked on, Buche said to me, "Joseph, keep yourself up! I will never abandon you!"

And I answered, "We will die together. I can endure it no longer; it is too horrible. It would be better to lie down."

"No!" he said, "we must keep on. The Prussians take no prisoners. Look! they are cutting down every one, as we did at Ligny."

So we kept along the road, with thousands of others, exhausted and downcast; but, nevertheless, turning from time to time in a body to fire if a Prussian squadron came too close. We were still the firmest and most steady. Here and there we came upon abandoned tumbrils, cannons, and waggons; the ditches to right and left were full of knapsacks, cartouche-boxes, guns, and sabres; many had flung away everything to get away quicker.

But the most terrible thing of all was to see the great ambulance-waggons standing in the middle of the high road full of wounded men. The drivers had cut the traces, and gone off with the horses for fear of being made prisoners. These unhappy people, half dead, their arms hanging listlessly down, who looked at us as we passed with glances of despair, remind me, when I think of them to-day, of those tufts of straw and hay that remain clinging to the bushes after a flood, when one says, "There is the harvest; there is all that the storm has left us!" That is what I have thought for the last fifty years.

What caused me the greatest sorrow, and wrenched my heart amid this disaster, was that I did not see one man of our battalion except us two. I thought to myself, "They cannot all be dead;" and I called out, "Jean, if I could find Zebedee it would give me courage."

But he did not reply to this; he only said, "Let us try to get away, Joseph! For me, if I am fortunate enough to see Harberg again, I shall not complain of the potatoes any more —no, no. God has punished me. I shall be glad enough to

work, and to go into the forest with the axe on my shoulder. If only I don't go back lame, and am obliged to hold out my hand for charity on the high road to live, as so many others have had to do! Let us try to get away safely."

I thought that he spoke very sensibly.

Towards half-past ten o'clock we approached Genappe, terrible cries were heard from afar. Great fires of straw had been lit in the middle of the main street to help us in the confusion, and we could see the houses and streets so full of people, horses, and baggage that one could not move a step forward. We were all aware that the Prussians might arrive at any moment; that they would have guns, and that it would be better for us to pass round the village than to be made prisoners in a body. Therefore we turned off to the left, across the corn-fields, with many others. We passed the Thy, up to our waists in water, and towards midnight we arrived at the two houses of Quatre-Bras.

We had done wisely in not entering Genappe; for we could already hear the guns fired by the Prussians against the village, and the sound of musketry. A number of fugitives also arrived on the road — cuirassiers, lancers, and chasseurs — not one stopped.

And now hunger tormented us in a terrible way. We could well imagine that in these houses everything had been eaten up long ago; but in spite of that we entered the one on the left. The floor was covered with straw, on which wounded men were lying. We had hardly opened the door when they began to cry out, and truly the odour was so bad that we went out again directly, and took the road to Charleroi.

The moon shone magnificently. On the right, among the corn, we saw a number of corpses that had not been buried. Buche went down into a furrow where three or four Englishmen were lying, about twenty-five paces off, one upon another. I wondered what he wanted among the corpses; but presently he came back with a tin bottle, which he held to his ear and shook, and he said to me, " Joseph, it's full."

But before uncorking it he washed it in a ditch, full of water; and then he opened it and drank, saying, " It is brandy! "

He passed it to me, and I drank also. I felt my life coming back to me; and handed back the bottle to him, still half full, thanking God for the good idea He had given my comrade.

We looked round on all sides to see if some of the dead might not have some bread also. But as the tumult grew louder, and

we were not strong enough to resist the attacks of the Prussians, if they surrounded us, we set out again, full of strength and courage. The brandy already made us look at things in a better light. I said, "Jean, now the worst is over; we shall see Phalsbourg and Harberg again. We are on a good road, which leads to France. If we had won the day we should have been obliged to go farther, to the farthest part of Germany. We should have had to defeat the Austrians and Russians; and if we had the good fortune to survive it, we should have returned as veterans, with grey heads, to live in garrison at Petite Pierre or somewhere else."

Those were the thoughts that passed through my head whilst we pushed forward with renewed strength. And Buche said, "The English are quite right to carry these tin bottles. If I had not seen the metal shining in the moonlight, I should have never thought of going to see what it was."

While we were thus talking, cavalry rode by us every moment. Their horses could hardly stand, but by beating and spurring, the riders made them move. The noise of the tumult far away began again, and the firing; but, happily, we had a good start.

It might have been one o'clock in the morning, and we thought ourselves safe, when all at once Buche said to me, "Joseph, here are the Prussians!"

And, looking behind me, I saw in the moonlight five brown hussars, of the same regiment as those who had cut Klipfel to pieces a year before; and that appeared to me a bad sign.

"Is your musket loaded?" I asked Buche.

"Yes."

"Eh bien! wait. We shall have to defend ourselves. I shall not yield."

"Nor shall I," said he. "I would rather die than be taken a prisoner."

Directly afterwards the Prussian officer cried out to us in an arrogant voice, "Lay down your arms!"

And Buche, instead of waiting, like I did, shot him through the breast.

Then the four others rushed upon us. Buche received a sabre cut that split his shako to the peak, but he killed the man who had wounded him with a bayonet-thrust. Then there were three left. I had my gun loaded, and Buche had posted himself with his back to a walnut-tree; each time the Prussians, who had retreated, began to advance, I pointed my musket at them, and none of them wished to be the first to be killed.

Whilst we waited, Buche with his bayonet advanced, and I with my gun at my shoulder, we heard a galloping on the road; that frightened us, for we thought it was some more Prussians, but it was some of our own lancers. Then the hussars rode down into the cornfields on the right, and Buche hastened to reload his gun.

Our lancers passed by, and we followed them rapidly. An officer who was with them told us that the emperor had started for Paris, and that King Jerome had taken the command of the army.

Buche had the skin of his head all split, but the bone was not hurt; the blood was running down over his cheeks. He bound up his head with his handkerchief; and after that we met no more Prussians.

At last, about two o'clock in the morning, when we were so tired that we could hardly walk any further, we saw, five or six hundred yards from us, on the left of the road, a little thicket of birch trees, and Buche said to me, "Look, Joseph, let us go in there. Let us lie down and sleep."

That was the very thing I wanted to do.

We went across the corn-fields to the wood and entered a sort of copse, consisting of little trees standing close together. Each of us had kept his knapsack, musket, and cartouche-box. We put our knapsacks on the ground to serve as pillows; the day had dawned long since, and all the great mingled mass had been passing along the road for hours. When we awoke we quietly resumed our way.

## CHAPTER XXII

A GREAT number of our comrades and of wounded men remained at Gosselies; but the main body continued their march, and towards nine o'clock, we began to see in the distance the steeples of Charleroi; when all at once cries, and shrieks, and musket-shots were heard in front of us more than half a league off. The whole vast column of miserable people halted, crying, "The town is shutting its gates! We are stopped here."

Desolation and despair were pictured on every face. But a minute afterwards a rumour spread that a convoy of provisions was coming, and that they would not distribute the food. Then dismay gave way to fury, and all along the road there arose one great cry, "Let us fall on them! Let us knock down the rascals who starve us! We are betrayed!"

Even the most cowed and the most exhausted began to hurry onward, raising their sabres or loading their muskets.

One could see immediately that it would be sheer slaughter if the drivers and escorts did not surrender. Buche himself cried out, "We must massacre them all! We are betrayed! Come on, Joseph!—let us revenge ourselves!"

But I held him back by the collar, and called out to him, "No, Jean, no! We have had massacres enough already! We have escaped from it all; and we must not get killed here by Frenchmen. Come with me!"

He resisted. But at last I pointed out to him a village on the left of the road, and said to him, "Look, yonder is the way to Harberg, and there are houses like those at Quatre Vents. Let us rather go there and ask for bread. I have money, and we shall be sure to get some. Come along!—that will be better than attacking convoys, like a band of wolves."

At last he let me drag him away. We went across the fields again. If it had not been for the hunger that urged us on, we should have sat down by the side of the path at every step. But after half an hour we arrived, by the grace of God, at a kind of abandoned farm; the windows were broken, the door stood wide open, and around were great heaps of black earth. We went into the living-room, crying out, "Is there any one here?"

We knocked upon the furniture with our muskets, but not a soul answered. Our excitement was the greater when we saw some poor creatures coming up by the same road as ourselves, and we thought, " They will come and eat our bread! "

Ah, those who have never suffered such privations do not know what a man's fury is. It is horrible—horrible! We had already broken the door of a drawer full of linen, and were overturning everything with our bayonets, when an old woman crawled from under a kitchen table which stood before the entrance to the cellar. She sobbed and said, " My God, my God, have pity on us! "

This house had been pillaged at dawn of day. They had carried off the horses; the man had disappeared, the servants had run away. In spite of our fury, the sight of the poor old woman made us ashamed of ourselves; and I said to her, " Don't be afraid. We are not monsters. Only give us some bread, or we shall perish! "

She sat on an old chair with her withered hands crossed on her knees, and said, " I have nothing left. They have taken all —mon Dieu!—all—all! "

Her grey hair hung down over her cheeks. I could have wept for her and for ourselves.

" Ah, we will go and search for ourselves," I said to Buche; and we went into all the rooms, and then into the stable. We could see nothing; everything had been carried off or broken.

I was just going out again when, behind the old door, in the shadow, I saw a white object against the wall. I stopped and stretched out my hand. It was a linen bag with a strap, and I undid it quickly, trembling with eagerness.

Buche looked at me. The bag was heavy. I opened it. There were two great black roots, half a loaf of bread as dry and hard as a stone, a great pair of shears for clipping the hedges, and quite at the bottom of the bag some onions and grey salt in a paper.

When we saw that we shouted; the fear of seeing the others come made us run out at the back as far as we could, among the rye, hiding and crouching like thieves. All our strength seemed to have returned to us, and we sat down beside a little brook. Buche said, " Listen—you will give me a share? "

" Yes," I answered, " you shall go halves in everything; you let me drink out of your bottle. I will share with you."

Then he was satisfied.

I cut the bread with my sword, and said, " Choose, Jean;

there's your root, here is half of the onions, and the salt shall be between us."

We ate the bread without even softening it in the water; we ate our root, the onions, and the salt. We should have liked to go on eating for ever; however, we were satisfied. Then we knelt down beside the rivulet with our hands in the water, and drank.

"Now let us go," said Buche. "We can leave the bag here."

In spite of the fatigue which bowed our legs, we went away to the left; while on the right, behind us, in the direction of Charleroi, the cries and musket-shots were repeated, and all along the road one could see men fighting. But this was far off. From time to time we turned our heads, and Buche said to me, "Joseph, you did well to draw me away. But for you I might perhaps have been lying yonder, by the side of the road, killed by a Frenchman. I was too hungry. But where shall we go now?"

I answered, "Follow me."

We soon passed through a large and well-proportioned village, which had likewise been plundered and abandoned. Farther on, we met some peasants who looked at us with dangerous glances, and stood on one side of the road to let us pass. We must have looked suspicious enough, especially Buche, with his bandaged head and a week's growth of beard on his chin, thick and hard as the bristles of a wild boar.

Towards one o'clock in the afternoon we had already re-crossed the Sambre on the bridge of Chatelot; as the Prussians were on the road we did not halt there. But already I had great confidence that we should escape. I thought, "If the Prussians continue their pursuit they will certainly follow the main body, to make more prisoners, and pick up the cannon, ammunition-waggons and baggage."

This was how men were obliged to reason, who, three days before, had made the world tremble.

I remember that when we arrived, about three o'clock, at a little village, we stopped in front of a blacksmith's shop to ask for something to drink. Immediately the country people surrounded us, and the smith, a big swarthy man, told us to go into the inn opposite, and that he would come, and we should take a jug of beer with him.

Of course we were pleased at this, for we were afraid of being arrested; we now saw that these people were on our side. The idea also came into my head that as I had some money

left in my bag, now might be the time when it would be useful to me.

Accordingly we went into the little inn, which was one of the poorest sort, with two windows looking on the street, and a round folding door, as in our villages at home. When we sat down the room became so full of people, men and women, who came to hear the news, that we could scarcely breathe.

Presently the smith came. He had taken off his leather apron and put on a blue smock; and directly he came in we noticed that five or six honest citizens were following him. They were the mayor, the deputy, and the municipal councillors of the place.

They sat down on the benches opposite us, and caused us to be served with some beer, which they relish in this country. Buche having asked for bread, the innkeeper's wife brought us a loaf and a large piece of beef in a flat dish, and they all said to us, "Eat—eat!"

When one or another began to question us about the battle, the mayor or the smith would interpose, and say, "Let the men finish their meal; you can see they have come a long distance."

And it was not till we had finished that they questioned us, asking whether it was true that the French had just lost a great battle. It had at first been reported that we were the victors, and now a rumour was spreading that we were beaten.

We understood that they had heard the report of Ligny, and that this had confused their ideas.

I felt ashamed to confess our utter rout. I looked at Buche, who said, "We have been betrayed! The traitors have divulged our plans; the army was full of traitors commissioned to cry '*Sauve qui peut!*' How do you suppose we could help losing with such things going on?"

This was the first I heard of the treason. Some wounded men had certainly cried out, "We are betrayed!" but I had not taken any notice of their words, and when Buche got us out of the difficulty in this way I was glad and astonished also.

Then these people became indignant with us against the traitors. We had to explain the battle and the treason to them. Buche said that the Prussians had come up through the treason of Marshal Grouchy. This seemed to me too strong; but the peasants, full of sympathy as they were, made us drink some more beer, and even gave us tobacco and pipes; and at last I said the same as Buche. But afterwards, when we had gone away from there, the thought of our abominable falsehoods

made me feel ashamed of myself, and I called out, "Do you know, Jean, that the way we told lies about the traitors was not right? If every one speaks in that way, at last we shall all be traitors, and the emperor will be the only honest man. It is disgracing our country to say that we have so many traitors among us. It is not true."

"Bah!" he replied, "we have been betrayed; but for that the English and the Prussians would not have made us beat a retreat."

And until eight o'clock in the evening we did nothing but dispute. By that time we had come to another village called Bouvigny. We were so tired that our legs were as stiff as stakes, and for a long time we had to summon all our courage to proceed at all.

We thought we were now a long way off from the Prussians. As I had money, we went into an inn and asked for a bedroom.

I took out a piece of six livres to show that we could pay. I had made up my mind to change my clothes next day, to leave my gun, knapsack, and cartouche-box behind me, and make my way home; for I considered the war was over, and was glad, amid all the great misfortunes that had happened, to have got over the business without broken arms and legs.

That night Buche and I, in a little room, with a picture of the Virgin and the child Jesus looking down upon us, slept a most delicious sleep.

Next day, instead of continuing our march, we were glad to remain sitting on good chairs in the kitchen, stretching our legs, and smoking our pipes, while we watched the great pot stewing on the fire, and we said, "Let us stay quietly here! By to-morrow we shall be thoroughly rested. We will buy two pairs of linen trousers and two blouses; we will cut a couple of good sticks in a hedge, and then go home by short stages."

It quite moved us to think of these agreeable things. It was from this inn, too, that I wrote to Catherine, Aunt Grethel, and Father Goulden. It was only these few words,—

"I am safe. Let us thank God! I am coming. I embrace you with all my heart a thousand thousand times!

"Joseph Bertha."

While I was writing this I praised the Lord; but many things were to happen before I was to mount our staircase at the corner of the Rue Fouquet, opposite the Boeuf Rouge. When a man

has been taken by the conscription, he must not be in a hurry to write that he is free. This happiness does not depend on us, and it is no use wishing to get away.

At last my letter went off to the post, and all that day we remained at the Mouton-d'or.

After eating a good supper, we went up to bed. I said to Buche, "Well, Jean, it is better to do what one likes than to be obliged to answer the roll-call."

We both laughed, in spite of the misfortunes of our country, without thinking of them, of course; for we should have been great rascals if we had laughed at them.

For the second time we were sleeping in our comfortable beds, when at one in the morning we were roused up in a remarkable fashion—the drums were beating. We could hear marching all through the village. I pushed Buche, who said, "I can hear it—the Prussians are outside."

You can imagine our dismay. But a moment afterwards it was much worse, for there was a knocking at the door of the inn, which was opened, and in two minutes the great room was full of people. They came upstairs. Buche and I had got up. He said, "I shall defend myself if they try to take me."

I did not dare to think about what I should do.

We were already nearly dressed, and I hoped to be able to run away in the darkness before I was recognised, when blows were struck upon our door, and a voice cried, "Open."

We were obliged to obey.

An infantry officer came in, wet through with the rain, with his great blue cloak clinging to his epaulettes; he was followed by an old sergeant, who carried a lantern. We saw at once that they were Frenchmen. The officer said to us sharply, "Where do you come from?"

"From Mont Saint Jean, lieutenant," I replied.

"To what regiment do you belong?"

"To the 6th Light Infantry."

He looked at the number on my shako that lay on the table, and I noticed his at the same time. He also belonged to the 6th Light Infantry.

"What battalion?" he asked, with a scowl.

"The 3rd."

Buche, who had turned quite pale, said nothing. The officer looked at our guns, knapsacks, and cartouche-boxes, hidden behind the bed in a corner.

"You have deserted," he said.

"No, lieutenant, we went away last of all, towards eight o'clock, from Mont Saint Jean."

"Come down! we shall see about that."

So we went down.

The officer followed us, and the sergeant marched on before with the lantern.

The great room below was full of officers of the 12th Mounted Chasseurs and of the 6th Light Infantry. The commandant of the 4th battalion was walking to and fro, smoking a little wooden pipe. All these people were wet through, and covered with mud.

The officer said a few words to the commandant, who stopped and fixed his black eyes upon us. He had a crooked nose, that seemed to bend downwards to his grey moustache. He did not look very kind, and immediately put five or six questions to us concerning our departure from Ligny, our route from Quatre Bras, and the battle; he winked his eyes and set his lips close. The others walked about, clanking their sabres, and listening to nothing. At last the commandant said, "Sergeant, these two men will join the 2nd company. You may go."

He again took up his pipe from the corner of the chimney-piece, and we went out with the sergeant, very glad to be out of it so cheaply, for we might have been shot as deserters before the enemy. The sergeant led us two hundred paces away, to the end of the village, near a large cart-shed. Fires had been lighted further off in the fields; some men were asleep under the shed near the stable doors, and the beams that supported it. A misty rain was falling in the street; the puddles of water trembled in the grey, blurred moonlight. We remained standing under a projecting roof, at the corner of the old house, thinking of our misfortunes.

After an hour had elapsed the drums began to beat, the men shook the hay and straw from their coats, and we started again. It was still very dark; behind us the chasseurs were sounding to boot and saddle.

Between three and four o'clock, at the dawn of day, we saw a great number of other regiments, cavalry, infantry, and artillery, on the march like ourselves, by different routes—the whole of Marshal Grouchy's corps in retreat! The wet weather, the dark sky, these long lines of men overwhelmed with fatigue, our chagrin at being retaken, all the blood spilt, and the thought of all our efforts only bringing off a second division—all this made us march with our heads bent; so

that we could hear nothing but the sound of our footsteps in the mud.

This melancholy had lasted a long time, when a voice said to me, "Good-morning, Joseph!"

I roused myself, and looked at the man who had spoken to me; then I recognised the son of Martin the turner, our neighbour at Phalsbourg, who was a corporal in the 6th, and was marching with the rest, carrying his musket as he liked. We shook hands. It was a great consolation to me to see one from my own neighbourhood.

In spite of the rain, which poured all the time, and the great fatigue, we kept on talking of this terrible campaign. I told him the story of the battle of Waterloo; he told me that the 4th battalion, after leaving Fleurus, had marched upon Wavre with the whole of Grouchy's corps; that during the afternoon of the next day, the 18th, cannonading had been heard on the left, and that every one wanted to march in that direction; that the officers were of the same opinion, but that the marshal, having received positive orders, had continued his way towards Wavre. It was not till between six and seven o'clock, when it was certain the Prussians had escaped, that the direction had been changed towards the left to join the emperor. Unfortunately it was too late, and towards midnight they had been obliged to take up a position in the fields. Each battalion had formed square. At three o'clock in the morning the guns of the Prussians had roused up the bivouacs, and firing continued until two in the afternoon, when the order came to retreat. But it was very late, said Martin, for part of the army which had beaten the emperor was already in our rear, and that forced us to march all the rest of the day and the following night, till six o'clock in the morning, to get clear. At six o'clock the battalion had taken up a position near the village of Temploux; at ten o'clock the Prussians arrived in superior numbers; the most vigorous resistance had been offered to them in order to give the artillery and baggage time to pass the bridge at Namur. The whole army corps had successfully defiled through the town, except the 4th battalion, which, through the fault of Commandant Delong, had allowed itself to be turned to the right of the road, and was obliged to throw itself into the Sambre to avoid being cut in two. Several men had been taken prisoners, and others had been drowned in the attempt to swim across the river. This is all that Martin could tell me; he had no news from our home.

That same day we passed through Givet; the battalion

bivouacked near the village of Hierches, half a league further on. Next day, after passing through Fumay and Rocroy, we slept at Bourg Fidele; the 23rd of June at Blombay; the 24th at Saulse Lenoy; and here we heard of the emperor's abdication. The next days we slept at Vitry, near Rheims, at Jonchery, and at Soissons; from thence the battalion took the road towards Villers Cotterets; but the enemy having already got before us we changed our direction towards La Ferté Milon, and we bivouacked at Neuchelles, a village which had been destroyed by the invasion of 1814, and not yet rebuilt.

We started from this place on the 29th about one o'clock in the morning, and passed through Meaux. We were obliged to take the route to Lagny, because the Prussians occupied Claye; we continued our march all that day and the following night.

On the 30th, at five o'clock in the morning, we were at the bridge of St. Maur. The same day, at three o'clock in the afternoon, we had passed Paris on the outside, and bivouacked at a place rich in all sorts of verdure, and called Vaugirard, on the road to Versailles. The first day of July we bivouacked near a beautiful place called Meudon. One could see by the gardens, the orchards surrounded with walls, the great size of the houses, and their well-kept appearance, that we were in the environs of the most beautiful city in the world; and yet we were living in the midst of misery and danger, and our hearts bled within us. The people were kind, and loved the soldiers; they called us defenders of our country, and the poorest would have been ready to fight by our side.

The 1st of July we marched out of our position at eleven o'clock at night to go to Saint Cloud, which consists of palaces and gardens, great trees and magnificent avenues—everything beautiful that can be imagined. At six o'clock we went away from Saint Cloud to go back and take up a position at Vaugirard. Terrible rumours were running through the town. The emperor had gone away to Rochefort. People said, " The King of Rome is coming back. Louis XVIII. is on his way."

Nothing was known in this town, where everything ought to have been known at once.

At Vaugirard the enemy advanced to attack us at about one o'clock in the afternoon, in the environs of the village of Issy. We fought till midnight for our capital. The people helped us, and carried off our wounded under the fire of the Prussians; and the women had pity on us.

It is impossible to describe what we suffered at being brought to this. I have seen even Buche shed tears, because we were in a manner dishonoured. I should have been glad to be spared the sight of that. Twelve days before I had not imagined France as it was. When I saw Paris, with its steeples and its innumerable palaces, extending as far as the horizon, I thought, "This is France! This is what our ancestors have been building up for hundreds and hundreds of years. What a misfortune to think that the Prussians and English should get so far as this!"

At four o'clock in the morning we attacked the Prussians with fresh fury, and took back the positions that had been lost the day before. Then it was that our generals came and announced a suspension of hostilities to us. These things occurred on the 3rd of July 1815. All thought that this suspension of hostilities was ordered to announce to the enemy that if he did not retire France would rise, as it had done in 1792, and crush him! We had similar ideas; and I, seeing that the people supported us, remembered the general levies of which Father Goulden had told me.

Unhappily a great many were so tired of Napoleon and his soldiers that they sacrificed the country itself to be rid of them; they put all the blame upon the emperor, and said that but for him the others would not have had the strength or the courage to come, that they had exhausted us, and that the Prussians themselves would give us more liberty.

The people talked like Father Goulden, but had neither arms nor cartridges; pikes had been made for them.

And as we were thinking on these things, the next day they announced the armistice to us, according to which the Prussians and the English were to occupy the barriers of Paris, and the French army was to retire behind the Loire.

Then the indignation of all honest men became so great, that anger made us furious; some broke their muskets, others tore up their uniforms, and every one cried out, "We are betrayed! We are delivered up!"

The old officers stood there, pale as death. The tears ran down over their cheeks. No one could appease us. We had fallen to less than nothing—we were a conquered people!

In two thousand years they will still be telling that Paris was taken by the Prussians and the English. It is an eternal disgrace; but the disgrace does not rest upon us.

The battalion started from Vaugirard at five in the afternoon, to bivouac at Montrouge. When we saw that the march

towards the Loire was beginning, every man said to himself, "What are we, then? Are we obliged to obey the Prussians? Because the Prussians want to see us on the other bank of the Loire, are we bound to obey? No, no; this cannot go on. Since we are betrayed—well, let us go. All this no longer concerns us. We have done our duty. We will not obey Blucher!"

And that same evening the desertions began. All the soldiers went off, some to the right, some to the left; men in blouses and poor old women wanted to lead us away into the innumerable streets, and tried to console us; but we did not want consolation. I said to Buche, "Let us leave all this—let us go back to Phalsbourg and to Harberg. Let us take up our own trades again, and live like honest folks. If the Austrians, the Prussians, or the Russians come there, the mountaineers and the townspeople will know how to defend themselves. It will require great battles to exterminate thousands upon thousands of them. Forward!"

We had some fifteen Lorrainers in the battalion; we went away together from Montrouge, the headquarters, and passed through Ivry and Bercy, which are very beautiful places; but sorrow prevented us from seeing a quarter of what we should have looked at. Some still wore their uniforms, others only their greatcoats, and others had bought a blouse.

Behind Saint Mandé, near a wood, where one sees high towers on the left, and which they told us was called Vincennes, we at last found the road to Strasbourg. It was on the morning of the 6th, and from this place we regularly walked twelve leagues a day.

On 8th July we already knew that Louis XVIII. was coming home, and that Monseigneur the Count of Artois would save his soul. All the carriages, post-chaises, and diligences already displayed the white flag. In all the villages through which we passed they were singing the *Te Deum*. The mayors and deputies praised and glorified the Lord for the return of Louis the Well-Beloved.

Some vagabonds, when they saw us pass by, called us Buonapartists and even set their dogs at us. But I would rather not speak of that, as such people are a disgrace to human nature. We only answered by looks of contempt, which made them still more insolent and furious. Many of us lifted up our sticks as if to say, "If we had you in a corner you would be as tame as lambs."

But the gendarmes backed up this species of Pinacles; in three or four places the outcries of the wretches caused us to be stopped. The gendarmes came and demanded our papers; they carried us before the mayor, and the rascals made us cry, "Vive le Roi!"

It was truly abominable; the old soldiers let themselves be taken to prison rather than shout the popular cry. Buche wanted to follow their example, but I said to him, "What does it matter to us if we cry, 'Vive Jean Claude!' or 'Vive Jean Nicolas!' All these kings and emperors, old and new, would not give a single hair of their heads to save our lives; and why should we allow ourselves to be massacred for the sake of one cry or another? No; that makes no difference to us. If people are so foolish, as we are not the strongest, we must satisfy them. Some day they will be crying something else, and later still another cry will be raised. Everything changes —good sense and a good heart are the only things that remain unchanged."

Buche would not understand this reasoning; but when the gendarmes came he obeyed all the same.

In proportion as we advanced one or the other of our company left us, and remained behind in his village, so that when we had passed Toul, Buche and I only were left.

It fell to our share to see the saddest spectacle of all—namely, crowds of Germans and Russians masters of Lorraine and Alsace. We saw them drilling at Luneville, Blamont, and Sarrebourg, with oak-twigs in their ugly shakos. What a wretched feeling it was to see savages like those living and enjoying themselves at the expense of our peasants! Ah! Father Goulden was in the right when he said that war-like glory costs dear! All I hope is that the Lord will deliver us from them for ever and ever.

At last, on the 16th July 1815, towards eleven o'clock in the morning, we arrived at Mittelbronn, the last village on the ridge before Phalsbourg. The blockade had been raised since the armistice, but Cossacks, Reserves, and Kaiserlichs filled all the country; they still had their batteries posted around the place, but there was no more firing; the gates of the town were open, and the people came out to reap the harvest.

It was essential to save the corn and rye, for no one can imagine the misery with so many useless beings to feed, who denied themselves nothing, and wanted to have schnapps and pork every day.

In front of all the doors, at all the windows, were to be seen these riff-raff, long dirty yellow beards, white coats full of vermin, and flat shakos. The men looked at us boastfully as they smoked their pipes in drunken idleness. We had to work for them, and in the end respectable people had to give them two milliards of money to induce them to go away.

How many things we might have had to say about all these idlers from Russia and Germany, if we had not done ten times more in their country! But it is better that each man should make his own reflections, and imagine the rest.

In front of Heitz's auberge I said to Buche, "Come in—my legs are failing me."

Mother Heitz, who in those days was still a young woman, was already crying, with hands in the air, "Ah, mon Dieu! it is Monsieur Joseph Bertha! Good heavens! what a surprise for the town!"

When I went in and sat down, and leant over the table to weep at my ease, Mother Heitz ran to get a bottle of wine from the cellar. I also heard Buche sobbing in a corner. Neither of us was able to speak, when we thought of the joy of our friends; the sight of the country had overcome us, and we were glad to think that our bones would one day rest in the cemetery of our village.

Meanwhile, we should soon embrace those who were dearest to us in the world.

When we had recovered ourselves a little, I said to Buche, "You shall go out first. I shall follow you at a distance, so that my wife and Father Goulden may not be too much surprised. You must first tell them that you met me unhurt the day after the battle; then that you met me again in the environs of Paris, and even on the road; and at last you should say, 'I think he is not far off, and that he will come presently.' Do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand," he replied, as he rose after emptying his glass, "and I shall do the same thing for my grandmother, who loves me more than the other lads. I shall send some one before me."

He went out directly, and I waited a few minutes; Mother Heitz was speaking to me, but I did not listen to her; I was thinking how far Buche might already have got. I thought I saw him in the outskirts, by the glacis, under the gate. All at once I rushed away, crying out, "Mother Heitz, I shall pay you later on!"

And I set off running. I have a sort of remembrance of being recognised by three or four persons, who cried out, "Why, it is Joseph Bertha!"

But I am not quite sure of this. All at once, without knowing how, I was running up the staircase of our house, and then I heard a loud cry. Catherine was in my arms! My head seemed to be confused, and it was not until the next moment that I awoke as it were from a dream, and saw the room, Father Goulden, Jean Buche, and Catherine, and then I fell sobbing so quickly that one would have thought the greatest misfortune had happened to me. Father Goulden stood silent, and so did Buche. I held Catherine on my knees, as I sat, and embraced her; she also wept. After a long time I cried out, "Ah, Father Goulden, forgive me! I should have embraced you before. Come, my father, whom I love as I love myself!"

"It is well, Joseph," he answered with emotion. "I know it—I am not jealous."

He stood wiping his eyes.

"Yes, yes, love one's family, and then one's friends—it is natural, my child—don't be uneasy."

Then I arose and clasped him to my heart.

The first words Catherine said to me were, "Joseph, I knew that you would come back; I had put my confidence in God! Now our greatest miseries are over, and we shall always remain together."

I had made her sit down on my knees again; her arm was on my shoulder. I looked at her, and she cast down her eyes and turned pale; what we had hoped for before my departure had come to pass. We were very happy!

Father Goulden stood near the bench and smiled; Jean, standing by the door, said, "Now I must go, Joseph. I am going to Harberg: my father and my grandmother expect me."

He held out his hand to me, and I held it in mine, and said, "Jean, stay; you must dine with us."

Father Goulden and Catherine also invited him, but he would not wait. When I embraced him on the staircase, I felt that I loved him as a brother.

He often came back afterwards; every time he came to the town during thirty years, he used always to stay with me. Now he sleeps behind the church at Hommert. He was a brave man—a good-hearted man. But what am I thinking of?

I must bring this story to an end, and I have said nothing

yet about Aunt Grethel, who arrived an hour afterwards. Oh, how she lifted up her hands, and how she embraced me, crying, "Joseph! Joseph! Here you are—you have escaped it all! Let them come and take you away from us again—let them only try! Ah, how sorry I have been that I let you go! How I have cursed the conscription, and all the rest of it! But you are back again, and all is well—all is well! The Lord has had pity on us!"

Yes, all that, all these old histories, when one thinks of them, make the tears come into one's eyes; it is like a vision—a dream of things forgotten years and years ago, and yet it is life. These joys and sorrows that we remember are the only things that bind us to earth, and prevent us, when we grow very old and our strength fails, and our eyes grow dim and we are but the shadow of our former selves, from wishing to be gone, and saying, "Enough of this!"

These old remembrances always remain alive; when we speak of our old dangers, we seem to be among them still; we speak of our old friends, and think we are still pressing their hands; of the woman we loved, and think when we look at her that she is still beautiful. And that which appeared to us just, honest, and wise in the old times, is honest, just, and wise now.

I remember—and with this I must conclude this long history—that after my return, for some months and even years, a great sadness was felt among the various families, and that people dared not speak frankly to one another, or utter wishes for the glory of the country. Zebedee himself, who came back with those who had leave granted them behind the Loire—Zebedee himself had lost heart. This arose from the vengeance taken, the shootings, massacres, and punishments of all kinds; it arose from our humiliation; from the hundred and fifty thousand Germans, Englishmen, and Russians placed in garrison in our fortresses; from the war indemnities, the millions of returned emigrants, the forced contributions, and principally from the laws against suspected persons, and from the old rights they wanted to re-establish.

All these things, which were contrary to good sense, contrary to the honour of the nation, the accusations made by such people as Pinacle, and the wrongs the old revolutionists were made to suffer—all these things at last made people sad; and often, when we were alone with Catherine and little Joseph, whom God had sent to us to console us amid these great misfor-

tunes, Father Goulden, after sitting in deep thought, would say to me,—

"Joseph, our unhappy country is brought very low! When Napoleon took France into his hands she was the greatest, the freest, the most powerful of nations; all the others admired and envied us! But now we are vanquished, ruined, and bled to exhaustion; the enemy fills our fortresses, and has got his foot on our throat. We see what has never been seen since France existed—the stranger master of our capital! We have seen this twice within two years! That is what one pays for putting one's liberty, fortune, and honour in the hands of an ambitious man! Yes, we are in a very unfortunate position; one would think that our great revolution is dead, and that the rights of man have perished! Well, we must not be despondent—all this will pass away! Those who march against justice and liberty will be driven away; those who want to re-establish privileges and titles will be looked upon as madmen. The great nation is resting, she is pondering on her faults, and watching those who want to lead her away from her interests. She can read to the bottom of their souls; and in spite of Swiss Guards, in spite of the Royal Guard, in spite of the Holy Alliance, when she is weary of her misery, she may turn out these people any day. And then it will be over, for France desires liberty, equality, and justice! The only thing we want is instruction; but the people are gaining knowledge every day, and profiting by our experience and our misfortunes. I shall, perhaps, not have the happiness of seeing the waking up of my country—I am too old to hope for such a thing—but you will see it, and the spectacle will console you for everything; you will be proud of belonging to that generous nation, which has advanced far beyond others since 1789; it is halting only for moments of rest during a long journey."

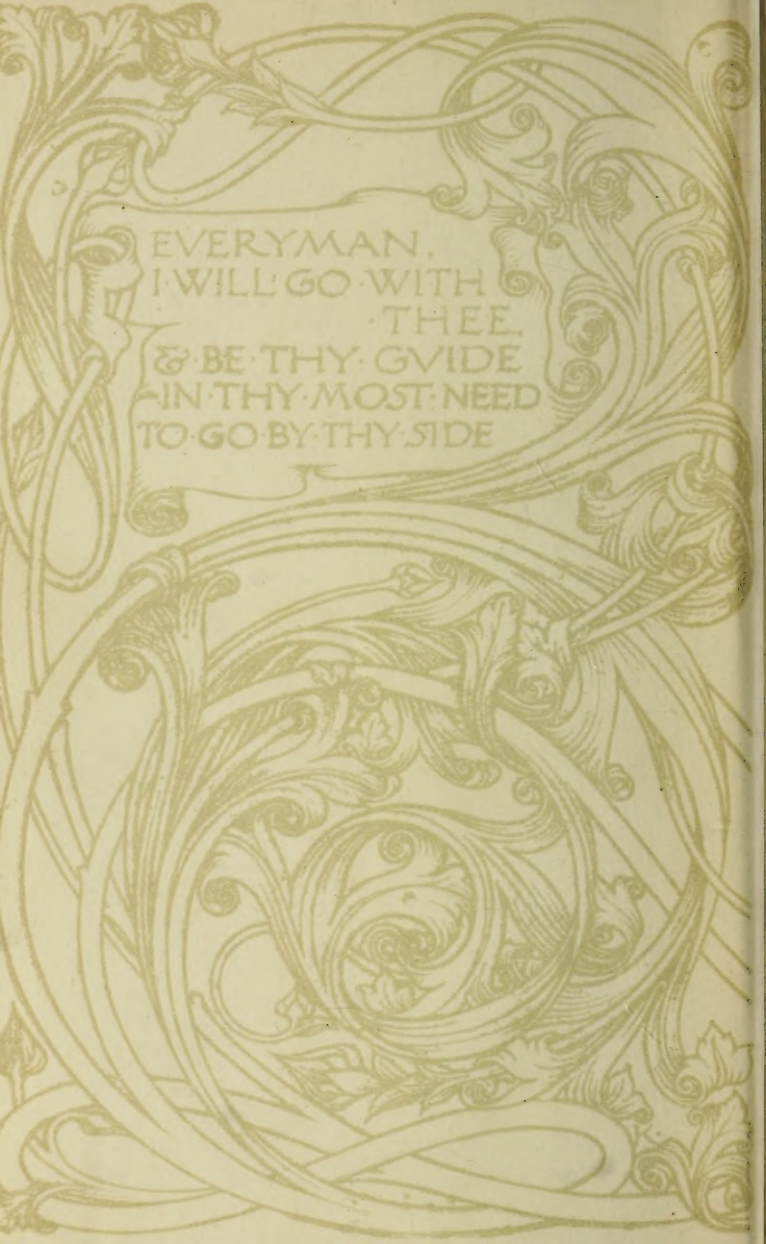
And the good man, to his last hour, preserved his calmness and his confidence.

And I have seen his words fulfilled. I have seen the return of the flag of liberty; I have seen the nation increasing in wealth, happiness, and instruction; I have seen those who wished to arrest the course of justice and re-establish the old regime forced to flee away; and I see that the human mind is continually progressive, and that the peasants would give their last shirt to help their children. Unfortunately, we have not schoolmasters enough. Ah, if we had fewer soldiers and more schoolmasters, everything would go on much more quickly.

But patience—it will come. The people begin to understand their rights; they know that war only brings increase of taxation; and as to-day the people are masters, who will dare to assert the contrary, when they say, "Instead of sending our sons to perish by thousands beneath the sword and the cannon, we will have them taught, and made men!"

In this hope I bid you farewell, my friends, and I embrace you with all my heart.

THE TEMPLE PRESS, PRINTERS, LETCHWORTH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